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*The January number of THE SMART SET will contain:
"A Sister to Husbands," by Caroline Duer*

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*Among the other contributors to the January number will be: Cyrus Townsend Brady, Elizabeth Knight Tompkins,
Churchill Williams, Hayden Carruth, Duffield Osborne and Prince Vladimir Vaniatsky.*

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MISS FITZMAURICE, DÉBUTANTE

By Frank Lee Benedict

IT was the last diplomatic reception of the season, and the White House was crowded. The secretary of war had been detained until late, but, having promised his wife to appear, he came, like a good, obedient American husband.

In the corridor, he felt his arm suddenly seized, and turned to find himself taken possession of by an exceedingly pretty young woman, who trembled from head to foot and fairly gasped for breath, though that necessity did not prevent her exclaiming, volubly:

"Oh, Mr. Fenton, do forgive me—but I am so frightened! I lost my aunt in the crowd—I don't know how I got out here! I recognized you by your photograph—auntie has it!—and I thought you would tell me what to do. Oh, I beg your pardon, but I was dying of fright!"

Now, the secretary was the most pacific and kind-hearted human being that ever helped to arrange a nation's martial decisions, and if the lady who clung to his arm had been as old and ugly as Hecate he would have been ready to assist her, though perhaps his sympathies would not have been so thoroughly roused as they were by the appeal of this dainty, elegant little creature, who looked as if she might have just stepped off a Watteau fan.

"I will try to help you find your aunt," he said. "Indeed, I shall be very happy to, but—please don't cry!"

"I won't—I won't!" she replied, choking back a sob in a very effective fashion. "I—I'm not so frightened now—if only you will forgive me!"

"No forgiveness is needed. Sit down in this chair for a moment. I will get you a glass of water."

"No—no—thanks! I don't need it, and I mustn't attract attention—auntie would never forgive me—she is so particular! It was all my own fault. I stopped to speak to some people—I thought she was close to me—but the first thing I knew she was gone, and the crowd pushed me along so fast I could not even call out."

She had seated herself, and was using her fan as gracefully as an Andalusian could have done, looking up at him with great, startled eyes, as innocent as those of a child.

"We shall be sure to come across her before long," the secretary said, with a confidence assumed for the young lady's consolation. But he knew that to find any one in that throng would be very like the proverbial hunt for the needle in the haystack. "Have I the pleasure of your aunt's acquaintance?" he added, remembering the mention of his photograph.

"You used to know her when you and she were boy and girl in New Hampshire—she was Mary Pierson. Then, afterward, in Colorado—she is Mrs. Henry Johnson, of Denver, you know. I hope you haven't forgotten!"

The secretary could recollect, more or less clearly, at least seven Mary Piersons in the neighborhood in which his youth had passed, and certainly half-a-score of Mrs. Henry Johnsons during his long residence in Colorado. Therefore, he was only bewildered by the information which she appeared certain must be ample and satisfac-

tory. But he was tactful, as well as kind-hearted, and said, reassuringly:

"Of course I remember—why, of course! And if her husband was the mine-owner, I knew him, too." The latter assertion was a safe one, since he had met numerous mine-owners named Johnson.

"That was he!" the young lady exclaimed, joyfully. "He's been dead some years, you know! Auntie and I came to Washington only a few days ago—our senator got us the card—we haven't been anywhere before! My aunt means to call on Mrs. Fenton—she had met her, too. And, oh, how can I thank you! Please help me find her—please!"

Her eyes grew frightened again, and she began to tremble violently, though struggling bravely for self-control.

"The best plan will be for me to take you to my wife," said the secretary. "She is with the other cabinet ladies in the reception-room. I shall tell the ushers to be on the lookout—that will be the quickest way, for we might keep on in the wrong direction. They will be sure to bring her to us in a few minutes."

He hurried off to give his instructions, and the pretty girl leaned back in her chair with a sigh of relief and a happy smile. He returned with the assurance that she need not feel troubled, and, as she took his arm, she said, laughingly, with the most becoming blush imaginable:

"I must introduce myself—I am Jacqueline Fitzmaurice. Oh, I do hope you haven't seen that dreadful name the local papers give me—they call me the Copper Princess, and it drives me wild! Sometimes I wish my poor uncle had never left me all those dreadful shares. But I'm not to blame, am I? Thank goodness, there's no copper in my complexion, and I am much too shy and savage to be a princess of any sort!"

She chattered in a very amusing fashion, beamed into increased prettiness each instant, and, long before they succeeded in reaching the Mecca in which the wives of the cabinet ministers and various ambassadors were

enshrined, the secretary decided that he had not in a great while met a girl so delightful, at once so distinguished and so natural.

The secretary's wife was as good-natured as her husband, and received the youthful stranger kindly when the diplomat mentioned her name, adding:

"A niece of Mrs. Henry Johnson's—Denver, you know."

The girl was just sufficiently confused to be attractive, but she bore the scrutiny of all those feminine eyes with apparent unconsciousness and the air of one in her proper sphere. In spite of her bewitching embarrassment, she took explanations into her own hands, and in five minutes had won Mrs. Fenton's favor; for, though she spoke in a low, rapid tone, every word was audible. The kindly lady was somewhat deaf, but would have died at the stake rather than acknowledge the fact, and was given to inveighing against the careless enunciation of the youthful generation.

Miss Fitzmaurice's white gown was the perfection of elegant simplicity—of the sort which Bonaparte declared the most ruinous of Josephine's whims—and the women recognized it as the conception of a French artiste exquisitely carried out. And they noticed that she wore about her throat three strings of pearls, of a size and regularity which surpassed any that their jewel-boxes contained.

While his wife soothed and encouraged the young girl, the secretary sensibly mentioned her to the other ladies as one of the Colorado heiresses, and when Mrs. Fenton presented her to several she was received graciously. One of the foreign notables dropped her fan, and, as Miss Fitzmaurice handed it to her, involuntarily spoke in her native language. The girl replied with an irreproachable accent, and, before many moments, showed in her artless way that several Continental tongues were familiar to her.

"Oh," she said, when the secretary complimented her, "I don't know anything else—I'm a stupid little creature. But there were sisters in the convent

of so many different nationalities that I could not help picking up languages—just as a parrot might. My aunt says she thinks I must have been one in my last incarnation. Oh, dear, oh, dear, I am so worried—poor auntie must be quite frantic!”

She had to put by her trouble again, for there was an opportunity to present her to the chief magistrate and his wife, and the secretary sent such urgent inquiries that presently somebody brought a message that a lady who had been searching a lost protégée had gone home, having heard that her charge had departed. The report, doubtless, had a foundation of truth; at all events, it served the purpose of relieving the ushers from further responsibility or trouble.

Miss Fitzmaurice declared that she must go immediately, but she could not hide her disappointment, and she looked so pretty in her resignation that gentle Mrs. Fenton was unable to resist saying:

“You must stay, and we will take you home.” And she bade her husband have some one telephone the state of things to the young lady’s relative.

But Miss Fitzmaurice begged to be allowed to write a note, and she and the secretary stepped back from the circle. An usher gave her a sheet of paper and his stylographic pen.

Relieved from her distress, Miss Fitzmaurice blossomed into positive beauty, and talked just enough to show that she was both clever and witty. She achieved a positive success in the diplomatic set, and each woman had the feeling that the young girl considered her the most attractive person in the group. She was introduced to dignitaries enough to have satisfied most girls for a season, walked about with magnificent generals and stately ministers, and charmed each man in turn.

“I know nothing about society,” she informed each, though never in the same words. “I’m a positive savage—of the cloister, though, not the forest. I left the convent only a few months ago, and I’m sure to say every-

thing I ought not. Oh, if I could talk like a society girl!—but I am just only poor little me!”

Somehow, the adjective seemed appropriate, though she was fully of medium height, but so slender and graceful!—with an air of needing protection, and an appealing expression in her beautiful eyes that no man could resist. No one could have said that she suggested the idea, yet most people took it for granted that she was intimate with the secretary and his wife, and before the evening was over the first lady in the land expressed a hope that Mrs. Fenton would bring her young friend to a tea that was to be given at the White House on the following Saturday.

The Fentons drove her to the hotel, and no mortal ever uttered thanks more delightfully than she.

“I feel,” she said, “as if I had been in an enchanted world, Mrs. Fenton, where you were queen! Oh, mayn’t I bring my aunt to-morrow to thank you? I do hope you will be able to tell her I was not too dreadfully awkward and impossible! Oh, if you would do me one other favor—mayn’t I kiss you? I shall feel as if it were a blessing! How every girl you know must worship you—and, if you had daughters, how happy you would make them!”

She had touched the tenderest chord in the good lady’s heart, and the latter returned with warmth the embrace which the secretary was conscious of envying her—though he thought he was wishing that destiny had sent them a daughter with such eyes and such winning manners.

Before she went to bed, Miss Fitzmaurice remarked to the elderly woman whom she had engaged a week previous in New York:

“Travis, I have had a telegram from dear auntie. She will not be able to join me yet, and I am going to stay with some friends. I shall let you go to Pittsburg, since your sister is ill. I shall pay your passage, and, when I am ready for you to come back, I shall telegraph you.”

II

THE next day, as Mrs. Fenton was about to sit down to her solitary luncheon, a servant announced Miss Fitzmaurice. She wore a traveling gown, but a princess might have envied her its perfect fit and the elegance of the figure it adorned.

"I have come only to say good-bye!" she cried, with her eyes full of tears. "Oh, I am the most unlucky girl alive! Dear auntie had a telegram last night from a cousin who is like a sister to her. The poor soul is dangerously ill in Chicago—aunt had to start by the first train this morning, and she was so miserable I made her take our maid. Now, I have to go on to Newark and stop with some connections of hers, and, oh, oh, I hardly know them, and they hate me! Isn't it awful? And just as you had made me acquainted with such delightful people—and the tea at the White House and the German ambassadress's reception, and all the rest! But I won't cry! Auntie sent her most grateful thanks for all your goodness—she says you must be an angel—which I had discovered for myself! She would have written, but she had cried her eyes out, and was in such haste!"

Miss Fitzmaurice was not to leave until four o'clock, and she shared Mrs. Fenton's meal, making herself more delightful than words could describe, bewailing her fate just sufficiently to show with what heavenly patience she could bear a disappointment that would have driven most girls to the verge of frenzy.

How it came about, tender-hearted Mrs. Fenton could not have told then or later; but, before an hour passed, she was insisting that her visitor must spend a few days in her house before the condemnation to exile, and, under the spur of Miss Fitzmaurice's pretty hesitation and girlish eagerness to accept, the invitation warmed into positive entreaty, until in the end it seemed to be the guest, not the hostess, who was conferring a favor.

A cabinet meeting detained the secretary until late, and before he dressed for dinner his wife, a little hesitatingly, informed him what she had done; but he praised her kindness.

"Old Henry Johnson once did me a favor," he said. "This will be a sort of return. And the Piersons were all nice people. I think I remember that aunt—there was a Mary Pierson in Hillsboro, who was just enough older than I for me to think she was perfect because she treated me as if I were grown up. Certainly, keep the girl as long as she will stay—she is remarkably well-bred. One doesn't see that too often in these days. I was thinking last night that if our baby had lived, you would have brought her up to have just such manners."

The recollection of their lost hope always moved them both, in spite of the long years, and they kissed each other in silence, feeling still more drawn toward the pretty creature who had resurrected that sacred memory.

There were guests at dinner, several of whom Miss Fitzmaurice had met on the previous evening; a reception later, to which she accompanied her host and hostess, and proved the most admired young woman there. She was dressed in white again, but its elegant simplicity was even more unique than that of the other gown, and she wore a necklace of emeralds that made the heart of many a woman ache.

"I wear white always in the evening," she said; "I never wore any color until I was twelve. Papa's mother was a Roman Catholic—a Frenchwoman—and I was *vouée à la Vierge*. Oh, no, auntie is a good Episcopalian. She was dreadfully frightened lest I should be a Romanist. I'm afraid I don't think seriously about things; but when a girl is obedient, and tries to make the people about her happy, I don't think she can go very far wrong—do you?"

Before the week ended, Miss Fitzmaurice was one of the chief attractions of the waning season, and had completely won the hearts of her new

guardians. She chanced to mention that she would be nineteen in a fortnight, and Mrs. Fenton's desire to celebrate the event by a small dance—it was too late for a ball—made an excuse for prolonging the girl's visit, which both husband and wife desired to do. She heard frequently from the aunt in Chicago; read aloud bits from her letters, and twice handed her hostess prettily worded notes expressive of the deepest gratitude. The secretary and his wife called her Jack, though a month previous Mrs. Fenton would not have believed she could bring her lips to bestow that masculine nickname on any girl.

"I'm awfully ashamed of it," Miss Fitzmaurice said, "but nobody can say Jacqueline—life isn't long enough for such a name."

"It is so delicious a misnomer that I rather like it," the secretary rejoined; and that settled the matter.

The week before her birthday, Miss Fitzmaurice met with the one misfortune that befell her. She had the ill-luck to offend the Duchess of St. Aubyn, and that gay American was by no means a placable person. Money matters had called her over to New York for a short time—such was the statement made by herself and her relatives—but there were plenty of ill-natured people who did not hesitate to say that she came because Gerald Tenby was making a tour of her native land. She was persuaded to pay a short visit to some friends in Washington, and, on the evening of her arrival, appeared at a reception—to find the imprudent Gerald devoting himself to the Colorado copper princess, and to learn that he had been doing so during the past week.

She snubbed Miss Fitzmaurice, and declared it odd that neither of the senators from her state knew anything about her; but as one was an old bachelor of retiring habits and the other had a hopelessly invalid wife, the ill-natured remark fell rather flat. As soon as she learned that she had interfered with the duchess's property, the prudent heiress behaved very dis-

creetly, but this did not appease the duchess. She accepted Mrs. Fenton's invitation to the birth-night festivities for the express purpose of ignoring the person for whom they were given, but a kind fate had Miss Fitzmaurice in charge, and did not propose to see her worsted.

The small dance proved a crowded and brilliant affair, and the young duchess managed to torment its heroine in a variety of ways, not in the least softened by her sweet submission and conciliatory efforts. While most of the guests were in the supper-rooms, the duchess and Gerald Tenby were standing in a little nook screened from the library by heavy curtains. This nest had a door which gave on a side hall, and Miss Fitzmaurice entered by that—not knowing anybody was there—just in time to see the young man drop her enemy's hand. At the same instant, a woman's voice from the other side of the curtains said, audibly:

"If she were not a duchess, people wouldn't put up with the way she goes on! They are in there, flirting, this minute—I mean to go in! For her to pretend hardly to remember who I am, though she was glad enough to know me before her father struck the gold mine!"

Miss Fitzmaurice made the duchess a sign to go out by the hall door, took Mr. Tenby's arm, and passed into the library, saying loudly enough for that lady to hear before she retreated:

"I happen to be the person who meets with your disapproval, Miss Jones. I brought Mr. Tenby to see the wonderful cactus, at Mrs. Fenton's request. I shall tell her you think she is an unwise chaperon."

Now, Miss Jones and her companion were two old maids who could not afford to offend the hostess or her charge, and both were overwhelmed with confusion, and abject in their apologies.

"I say, you are a trump!" the delighted Gerald exclaimed, as he led Miss Fitzmaurice away. "You know the duchess and I are connections—

the duke is my cousin, and she and I are like brother and sister."

"Of course," rejoined Miss Fitzmaurice. "Do take her into the supper-room," she added, as they entered one of the salons which the duchess had already reached.

III

THE *St. Paul* was about to start on its return voyage. The Duchess of St. Aubyn was on board with her companion, her maids and her man, not to mention her other impedimenta in the way of multitudinous trunks. It happened that Mr. Tenby was also to sail, but he had gone down to Sandy Hook on some friend's yacht earlier in the day.

Miss Fitzmaurice appeared from below with her maid in her wake, and was close to the duchess before she seemed to see her. The pair had not met since the evening of Mrs. Fenton's dance several weeks before.

"Is it possible? Miss Fitzmaurice—I am sure it is!" the duchess said, rather languidly, but in the most amiable tone. "Have you come to see some friends off?"

"Oh, no! My aunt and I are going across. And your grace is going, too? I have been in the country—and I never look at a newspaper, so I had not heard you were to sail by this steamer."

She must have forgotten that, the day after the duchess left Washington, she heard one of the embassy attachés mention the fact, and that, by an odd coincidence, she had on that same evening received a telegram from her aunt, who had decided they would sail by the *St. Paul* on the twenty-fifth of April.

"Your first visit?" the duchess asked.

"Yes, and I am quite wild! We are going to spend the London season with Lady Desborough—an old friend of dear auntie's."

Now, the duchess was well acquainted with her ladyship, who was a somewhat important personage, owing to her family and her cleverness.

"That will be delightful," she said; "Lady Desborough is charming."

"Yes, but I am worried to death. My aunt has not arrived, and I thought she would reach the steamer before me. She left Chicago yesterday—the express ought to have been in an hour ago. She was coming directly on board. The steamer will sail in a quarter-of-an-hour, and she is not here yet. I am almost crazy!"

As the duchess was expressing polite condolences, the purser came up with a telegram for Miss Fitzmaurice. She tore it open, glanced down the lines, and uttered a cry of dismay.

"I hope no accident has happened," the duchess said.

"Oh, there has been a wreck!" moaned Miss Fitzmaurice. "The express can't get here before three o'clock! Auntie isn't hurt—she says I must go, and she will follow on Saturday's steamer. But I can't, I can't!"

"I'm afraid they will make you pay for the state-room all the same," the duchess observed, who, rich as she was, had a dislike, not common with her countrywomen, of wasting money.

"Oh, that is of no consequence," Miss Fitzmaurice declared; "it is only a thousand dollars! But to go alone!—I never even went so far as Buffalo unless my aunt was with me. She says she will telegraph Lady Desborough to have me met. But just think of poor me during the voyage—and I am shy with strangers, and an ignorant little savage only six months out of a convent. I should die of fright before we were out of sight of land."

The duchess was not a wonderfully clever woman, but she was shrewd enough where her own interests or comfort were concerned. She could think quickly, too, and it flashed through her mind now that, in a way, Miss Fitzmaurice's presence might prove a convenience; besides, the girl really had behaved very well that night in Washington. The duke's relative who accompanied the duchess was a somewhat acid and suspicious

spinster; she had more than once expressed disapproval of her charge, and had shown strong dissatisfaction when she learned that Gerald Tenby was to sail on the *St. Paul*. It could be made plain to the Honorable Alicia Stanmore that the fact of the Colorado heiress being on board accounted for Gerald's sudden resolution to return home. And, after all, they ought to help him—Gerald really must marry money. No plea could be more potent with the spinster.

"Oh, Coralie," Miss Fitzmaurice was saying, in French, to her maid, "we must get the luggage off!" Then, to the purser who lingered, "My trunks—I can't go—oh, please have my trunks got!"

She did not cry, but she wrung her hands, white and dismayed, and groaned aloud when the man said:

"Those in the hold can't be got out—we sail in a few minutes."

"What shall I do?" moaned Miss Fitzmaurice.

"You must go," said the duchess. "Miss Stanmore and I will take care of you, and see you safe under Lady Desborough's wing."

"Oh, you are an angel of goodness—but I couldn't think of thrusting myself on you! I never heard of anybody so kind. But, no, no! Coralie, get our bags! Oh, dear auntie would be ready to worship your grace, but I must not trespass on your kind impulse!"

Now, it is human to grow more insistent when the person one is urging hesitates to accept one's offers; and the duchess insisted strongly. Miss Stanmore approached at the moment. The duchess drew the spinster aside, explained the state of affairs, and rapidly pointed out their plain duty by Gerald, who had taken his passage expressly to make the voyage in company with the heiress.

The steamer sailed at its appointed hour with Miss Fitzmaurice on board, and, brief as the time was, the young lady found an opportunity to inform the reporter of a leading daily journal that she was going to Europe under

the chaperonage of the Duchess of St. Aubyn.

A violent storm lengthened the passage to nine days. During most of the voyage the duchess was horribly seasick—a misfortune she had never before experienced—and had to lie helpless in her berth. It was slight comfort to hear Miss Stanmore each day chant the Colorado girl's praises with increased energy, to have that grateful young creature look in on her with a face as radiant and healthful as if the ocean had been her natural element, to hear Alicia assert that the dear child was much more fit to share an earl's coronet—that would later be Mr. Tenby's decoration—than any other American girl she ever met.

"And don't turn rusty, Isabel! Of course, I was not thinking of you! It is hard enough to have you sick—you needn't be bad-tempered, too!"

Many times, in the course of her six-and-twenty years, the duchess had known women she thought she hated; but when they landed at Southampton she knew she had never understood before what hatred meant. She loathed Alicia, and would do so to the day of her death, but her animosity toward that strong-minded female was feeble compared to her feeling for the bewitching, grateful Miss Fitzmaurice.

IV

THE May sun made even London squares look bright. Lady Desborough was seated in her morning-room in a mood that suited the weather. She had won largely at bridge the night before, she had just received a command to a royal dinner, no creditor was specially pressing, and, best of all, her glass assured her that she need dread no falling off in her looks—for another year, at least.

There were as many flowers and other pleasant reminders on her table as if a decade still intervened between her and her thirty-eight years, and the season had commenced for her with unusual brilliancy. She had just

read a note from a young guardsman who, with a boy's weakness for mature womanhood, had fallen temporarily in love with her; she held in her hand a message from an eligible elderly admirer whom she could marry if she wished; and, altogether, life seemed really worth living.

Her maid entered with a card, and the information that the young lady whose name it bore desired to see her.

"Miss Fitzmaurice—Colorado," she read. "I don't know her—and what an hour to come—the impudence of those American girls! Somers, say that I am engaged."

"Indeed, milady, she said she brought you some important news—and she is a most elegant young lady—such a bonnet, milady!"

"Oh, well, let her come up; I am not going down-stairs."

Presently, the copper princess appeared with her beaming smile, her half-frightened eyes and her most captivating air of girlish confusion, which nothing but the consciousness of assured position could subdue.

Her ladyship was secretly impressed by the stranger's grace and elegance, but her face was cold, and her voice held a rebuke in its polished quiet.

"Miss Fitzmaurice, I believe?" with a glance at the card as if to be certain she had the name correctly.

"Yes," the visitor said, in a tone like the ripple of water. "So good of you to see me, Lady Desborough! I suppose I ought to have sent you a note. But I'm such a little savage—been in a convent nearly all my life—and never can remember conventionalities until too late! And I was dying to have a glimpse of you—and, oh, I should have known you anywhere from your miniature—you were just eighteen when it was painted."

"That is very good of you. But, really—may I ask where you could possibly have seen a picture of me, taken when I was eighteen?"

"It is the one you gave my uncle—Colonel Ralston—handsome Jack, they say he was always called over here in Europe."

Her ladyship wore a suspicion of rouge on her cheeks, but it could not hide the pallor which overspread them. However, she looked the girl full in the eyes, and her voice did not falter.

"Colonel Ralston? Yes, it seems to me I met an American of that name—a few times—ages ago—but I do not recollect you."

"I was sure you had not forgotten my dear uncle!" cooed Miss Fitzmaurice; "nor the Winter in Palermo—nor the Summer in the Tyrol. And, oh, how wickedly your old aunt behaved!"

Even the social training of twenty years was not proof against this enthusiastic outburst, but Lady Desborough struggled bravely.

"You are making some inexplicable mistake, Miss—Fitzmaurice! I would advise you to curb your American impatience, another time, and be certain of your facts before you disregard conventionalities in so extraordinary a manner. I am rather busy this morning, and must ask you to excuse me."

She touched a hand-bell on the table, as if about to ring, but sank back helpless in her chair as the visitor said, rapidly:

"I have all your letters—I took care of dear uncle in his last illness. He used to talk incessantly about you, and his greatest pleasure was to read over the letters. He wanted to have them buried with him, but I broke down when he died and was ill for weeks, and nobody else knew about them, so they were still there when I got well enough to examine things."

"I tell you again that you are making some strange mistake."

"No—and I hope you will not," said Miss Fitzmaurice, softly.

"What do you want—what have you come here for?" demanded Lady Desborough, and, frightened as her voice was, it sounded still more angry.

"I have come to spend the London season with you! The Duchess of St. Aubyn brought me over—my aunt was unavoidably detained—but I

knew I should need no other chaperon after I saw you."

Lady Desborough half rose, but her knees trembled so violently that she was forced to resear herself. Still, she tried to keep her tormentor at bay, though now it was desperation, not courage, that nerved her.

"Do you remember the name of the asylum you escaped from?" she asked.

"It would be of no consequence if I did," said Miss Fitzmaurice, her voice as soft and her manner as propitiatory as ever. "Your house is the asylum I want now—you won't find me the slightest trouble."

"If you are not mad," gasped her ladyship, "you are the most insolent, hardened creature I ever met, even among your countrywomen—and I have seen specimens I thought could not be surpassed."

"Dear Lady Desborough," quavered her visitor, "don't say such cruel things to poor little me—you are so kind-hearted that you will be sorry later."

"I could not advise you to trust to that."

"Oh, you cannot have changed—and the girl that wrote those letters was all heart! How you must have loved him to—to——"

Lady Desborough was far paler now; before she could check herself, her hands were raised with an appealing gesture. She closed her eyes for an instant, then once more desperately faced the intruder.

"If you don't leave my house instantly, I shall have you arrested for an attempt at blackmailing!" she cried, but the moan in her voice rendered the threat weak and ineffectual.

"Then I should have to show the letters to defend myself—how dreadful for both of us! Dear Lady Desborough, get your senses back! Oh, I admire you so much—and you are even lovelier than I expected! The letters are the most beautiful things I ever read—everybody would cry their eyes out if they were published in a volume—and there are so many. Just see for yourself—this is a copy of one."

Her victim automatically extended her hand for the sheet which was held before her eyes. She read it, then tore the pages in fragments, and burst into tears.

"I wish you were dead!" she sobbed. "I've three minds to choke you—I——"

She could not control her hysterical emotion any longer, and, for a few moments, she was indeed a pitiable object. Miss Fitzmaurice cried from sympathy, but she did not forget her presence of mind. She locked the door, took a little bottle from a bag that hung at her side, found a tumbler, mixed the contents of the flask with water, and held it to Lady Desborough's lips, saying:

"It is ammonia and whiskey—I was sure you would be touched to the heart by the thought of dear uncle, and wouldn't want anybody to see you. Oh, I think you are the bravest, most admirable woman in the world. Do try to like me, for Uncle Jack's sake."

The draught had a stimulating effect on the poor lady's nerves; after a little, she could talk—could think, too, and realized that, whatever her conqueror's terms, she must submit to them.

"I want those letters—that's the first thing!" she exclaimed.

"No—the last," said Miss Fitzmaurice.

"What do you want—what do you expect to gain?"

"I told you, dear Lady Desborough! And I want, besides staying with you, to go to court and have what we Americans call a beautiful time! You must let me pay my share of the expense—I dare say it may come to one thousand pounds—we will make it two, for safety—and we will go right off to my bankers and have them deposit that sum at yours."

There was a little consolation in this offer to a woman who had only some three thousand as her yearly income, and habitually spent more than double that amount.

"So you are one of those awfully rich American girls!" she said. "But,

however rich you may be, you have more brass than gold."

"Indeed, I haven't! It's only that I am a young savage, and don't understand conventionalities. I can't control my fortune yet—they give me sixty thousand dollars a year—that's twelve thousand pounds—auntie says it is enough for any girl."

"I won't have your aunt coming here——"

"Oh, I shall cable her not to sail—she will be just too glad. She does so dread a sea voyage."

"I won't have you, either——"

"Dear Lady Desborough—when it is all so nicely arranged, and we are getting comfortable together!"

"Do you know anybody—have you any credentials?"

Miss Fitzmaurice took several letters out of her bag.

"There is one from the President's wife to our ambassadress, and there is one from our secretary of war. I spent the season at his house. He and his wife wanted me to live with them. I have oceans more—oh, to everybody worth knowing! And I'll show you the newspapers telling about my trip—only, they will call me the Copper Princess, and I don't want that! Dear Lady Desborough, I know you will admit I am nice, and I'm an adaptable creature. I'm not clever, but I'm adaptable."

"Not clever! Great heavens! Now, first of all, I want those letters!"

"They are safe in a box I deposited this morning at my bankers'! Now, the sooner I am settled here, the better. I told the duchess I was coming over by your invitation—that you were an old friend of my——"

"You young fiend!"

"—dear aunt's, who adored you. I have three great arks full of beautiful clothes, and a box to be sent from Paris—the very newest styles—and you will find me presentable, if I am shy. I never was out in society till I went to Washington to visit the Fentons—and that was near the close of the season! And, oh, the poor duchess was so seasick, and that wicked Mr.

Tenby said a woman who was ought to be thrown overboard——"

"Gerald Tenby came on the same steamer?"

"Yes, and Miss Stanmore—isn't she a stiff old frump? But I like her. Well, she seemed to think he came because I was on board, and I do think he is rather nice—for an Englishman."

"And did the duchess seem pleased, too?"

"Oh, she was too seasick to ask—one couldn't blame her for being a little cross now and then."

"So you have put a spoke in Isabel St. Aubyn's wheel, you young demon? Well, for that I can forgive you a good deal—there isn't a woman I hate worse among all those American-English impertinencies."

"I couldn't hate anybody if I tried," said Miss Fitzmaurice. "And now, dear Lady Desborough, if you will have my trunks sent for—and my maid is a good creature—dresses hair like a French angel!—I shall be *so* happy. Then we might drive to the bank—my aunt says business should always be settled first. Then, perhaps, we could drive in the Park—oh, I go wild to think of it! And do you have an opera-box by the season? Not this year? Then you must let me give one as a little token of love at first sight."

That morning proved the most bewildering that Lady Desborough had ever spent. She felt that she must be moving in a dream from which she would presently awaken. Yet it remained a fact that Miss Fitzmaurice was established in her house—three thousand pounds had been deposited at her bankers', but—the letters were not in her keeping.

V

Miss FITZMAURICE's presentation at court soon followed. It was a little hard on Isabel St. Aubyn that less than a fortnight later she should have been seated with Lady Desborough when the young woman came in, exclaiming:

"Oh, I am frightened to death!

Dear duchess, how lucky you are here—you will tell me how to behave! What did you do the first time you went to Windsor? The ambassador and his wife are going from Saturday till Monday, and have received a command—isn't that the word?—to bring poor little me!" Lady Desborough smiled, for the duchess had never yet received that coveted summons, as the duke was not a favorite with royalty. "It is an old story with you now, of course—but when you were a girl! Only, you are one of the tall, stately creatures with a neck like a swan, so even fright would be becoming!"

Lady Desborough laughed outright, for, though handsome, the duchess was too tall, and her neck was too long.

"You are the craziest puss alive, Jack!" said her ladyship, to account for her amusement; but the duchess was not deceived, and could have strangled them both with serene satisfaction.

The London season reached the full tide of June, and Miss Fitzmaurice floated on the topmost wave. Even women praised her, and among elderly dowagers she had no warmer admirer than the Lady Constantia Tenby, who had never shared her son's liking for the duchess. A still more potent dame was friendly in her graciousness—no less a personage than the Marchioness of Hartby, whose second son, Lord Edgar Rushton, was among the most assiduous of the young lady's courtiers. His elder brother regretted that before she appeared on the horizon he had taken to wife a very plain girl whose fortune was far smaller than that with which report credited the Colorado heiress.

Lady Desborough quite adored her charge—a younger sister would not have been half so caressing and obedient—and almost forgot the peculiar complexion of their first interview. The letters were never mentioned between them; her ladyship knew that, for the present, she was safe, and rather admired the girl's wisdom in keeping fast hold of her one weapon of defense. At the American embassy, Miss Fitz-

maurice was a prime favorite, and, as the lady of the mansion had no daughter, she was glad of the aid of a creature so charming and attractive in the discharge of the social duties which she found somewhat wearisome.

When Miss Fitzmaurice learned that Lady Desborough liked equestrian exercise, she presented her with a fine horse, bought one for herself, and provided a third for a groom, taking all the expenses involved on her own shoulders. If one of the old centaurs had possessed a daughter, she could not have been a more graceful and daring rider. And Jack was not satisfied with the stereotyped promenades in the crowded Park. Often, after coming home from a ball, long past sunrise, instead of going to bed she would be off for a two hours' gallop; and various men, when they discovered this practice, took to early riding. Her groom added largely to his pocket-money by leaving word as to his young mistress's route, till the dandies found that the fickle girl never went in the direction she had announced her intention of taking.

"It is bad enough to have them dangling about three-quarters of the time," she said to her hostess; "but to be bothered when I want to go like the wind and try to fancy myself in sight of the cañons—well, I can't and I won't. Besides, it wouldn't be proper."

"Good heavens," returned her ladyship, "you might ride full tilt through Westminster Abbey, and everybody would think it quite correct. I can't imagine how a girl brought up in a convent ever learned to ride as you do."

"Oh, my uncle always insisted on my going to him for the long vacations. Ah, those rides, those rides! Since I came to auntie it has been different—she is so particular."

"You will break your neck some day," her friend said.

The prophecy did not come true, but one morning Jack saved her groom's neck—caught his horse as it was running away, and broke his fall so that he escaped with a few bruises. It was

a wonderful sight to see the girl, steady as a rock in her saddle, controlling the two horses with one hand, and holding the groom with the other.

The accident happened off in the neighborhood of Willesden, in one of the shady lanes still left, but it had a spectator—a gentleman who was approaching from the opposite direction. He hurried forward, relieved Miss Fitzmaurice of the second horse, tied it to a tree, and helped the groom to a sitting posture, for the latter was so sorely shaken that he could not rise. The young lady was out of her saddle in a flash, secured her steed to another tree, and showed herself most unfashionably helpful.

"I'll run to that house and bring the poor chap some water," the stranger said, and she watched him as he dashed away.

"Nobody but a man that has lived on the plains ever ran like that," was Jack's rapid mental comment. "He is an American, too."

The unfortunate man had strained his back so severely that it became clear he could not get into the saddle. Miss Fitzmaurice told him he would have to go to some inn and rest till he found himself able to return by the underground. Then the horse became a problem, for Tony insisted there was no livery-stable near, and no place where the animal could be left in safety. Then, too, her own return became a matter for consideration. If she rode the length of the Park alone, even at that early hour, she was likely to attract attention. At first, while the pair talked, Tony had been too dizzy and sick to listen, and, when he did understand, he thought the gentleman an acquaintance of his mistress.

"If there was somebody to ride the 'orse back, miss," he remarked, in a tentative way. "I suppose you rode out yourself, sir?"

"No; I came for a morning tramp," the gentleman replied, looking at Miss Fitzmaurice.

Both involuntarily smiled as their eyes met; the same thought crossed their minds, and each read that of the

other—how impossible it was for her to ask a stranger to ride the horse or for him to offer to do so. Yet such a proceeding was the only practical and easy solution of the difficulty.

By this time, Tony was on his feet; but the effort to walk was evidently painful enough. A workman came along at the moment, and Miss Fitzmaurice asked him to help her groom to some house. Then she remembered that she had no money, and her half-whispered inquiry revealed the fact that Tony was in the same predicament.

"I'm so sorry, miss—they called me in such a 'urry! Any'ow, I ought to be shot for making you so much trouble—what will 'er ladyship say!"

"It was all my fault, Tony—don't be troubled," she replied, in such a kindly way that the gentleman smiled approvingly to himself.

He put some half-crowns in the groom's hand, and gave him a stout stick he carried. Like Miss Fitzmaurice, he was so full of sympathy for the pain Tony suffered that he forgot the horse. If the servant could think at all, he supposed it was settled that this acquaintance of his mistress would ride back with her. As a turn in the road hid the two men, the young pair for the first time remembered the horse. Miss Fitzmaurice looked disturbed for an instant; then the absurdity of the predicament struck her, and she laughed—that delightful laugh of hers that was like the ripple of a brook.

"I know you are an American," she said. "So am I."

"I am only too glad to be of service to a countrywoman," he replied, as soon as he could subdue the irresistible contagion of her laughter. "My name is Alderson." He put his hand in his coat-pocket; he had no card-case, but he drew out a letter. "Luckily, here is a note I received last night from our ambassador, which may serve as a credential."

Miss Fitzmaurice glanced at the open page he held out, and nodded.

"You will have to take me on

trust," she said. "I never heard of anything so funny—I never dreamed of having an adventure in this home of tradition and ceremony."

She laughed again, and this time he joined freely in her merriment. He appeared to be about twenty-six—a tall, splendidly built chap, not exactly handsome, but with a face that invited confidence. His eyes were a clear gray, and he looked at one in a frank, boyish way. His chin was as resolute as if molded from steel. His whole bearing proclaimed him a thorough gentleman, too, yet not just of the stereotyped, conventional order—the same indescribable difference there was in Miss Fitzmaurice from the stereotyped young lady. The two must infallibly give to observant people the impression of a pair accustomed to a freer, less-restrained life than that of fashionable society; there was something suggestive of the liberty of the woods in their eyes, a ring frank as that of the west wind in their voices.

"I am from California," he said.

"And I am from Colorado," she replied. "I am Miss Fitzmaurice—but I suppose the name won't tell you much."

"Why, I have heard scarcely anything else these three days I have been in this suffocating old town!" he cried, delightedly. "Mrs. Marston promised I should have the honor of sitting next you at dinner to-night."

"She will find we have already broken the ice of introduction! Really, I don't see anything else for it—you will have to see me safely home! The horse is a very good one—I hope you won't mind the trouble too much."

"Trouble!" he exclaimed, but not a word more. He unfastened her horse, saying, "Let me help you up."

She was standing on a low mound. As he led the horse forward, she put one hand on the pommel, and sprang into the saddle with as much ease as she would have sat down in a chair. They cantered away, and in five minutes were talking as gaily as if they had known each other for a week. Long before they reached the Park he

had told her that he was a civil engineer, and had been sent over to England on business connected with his profession. Before the ride was half over, they discovered they had mutual acquaintances—the Fentons among them—and all sorts of tastes and fancies in common.

"I'm not a bit of a society man," he said, "but I want to see what this great London world is like, and Mrs. Marston promises I shall. It may do very well for a few weeks—but I'd grow imbecile if I had to live the sort of life these people do. There must be a horrible monotony about it—same round, year after year, so many balls, so many weeks of visiting in one another's country houses! I should soon want more air and a wider horizon. Don't you feel so?"

"It's been just like a gorgeous dream!" cried Miss Fitzmaurice. "It's lovely to be in it—the slang, you know—that just expresses what I feel."

"I should think you might," he rejoined. "Mrs. Marston says you are the greatest success of any American girl yet."

"Oh, everybody is very kind to me! Why, it is like whirling round in a dervish dance—you're so dizzy you can't stop! But I know what you mean about the sameness—I expect one would feel that after a while. It seems wide as the world now—the circle—but I can fancy its looking as narrow as a tea-cup as the years went on."

"I am sure it would to you! A girl who can ride as you do ought to have six months of free air every year, but I don't believe there is any left a thousand miles away from the Pacific coast."

"Oh, I don't want to think of that. I should grow homesick, and I must not. I try to make myself believe I wish to live here always."

"Yes, I see—like the other American girls!"

He stopped short, conscious he was near an impertinence, but he looked at her with a sudden disappointment in his eyes of which he remained un-

conscious, though she understood perfectly its meaning. He thought she was going to buy a title, like the others, and he had not wished to believe her that kind of a girl.

Though the Park at that hour was what society would have called deserted, there were plenty of people to remark the striking pair—people who knew the famous American beauty by sight, and pointed her out to their companions. Presently, they met three men of her acquaintance on horse-back, who lifted their hats and regarded her escort with the stoniest of British stares.

"I never thought till this minute," cried Miss Fitzmaurice, "how shocked English people would be at my riding with a stranger. I ought to have been rude to you—sat and cried till I could telephone to Lady Desborough to send the carriage! She's pretty sensible, though, because she is part Irish. But average people! I was dying to stop those men and say I didn't know you from Adam."

"They glared at me as if it were like my impudence to be with you—especially that handsome chap in the middle."

"Oh, that was Lord Edgar Rushton, and the one to the left was Mr. Tenby."

"Then," said Alderson, "I know why they glared—I read it in the papers yesterday!" Again she saw disappointment in his eyes, and somehow she had a swift vision of mountains, and heard the wind in the cañons! She was very tired and still more ridiculous!

"I might say I knew you," she observed, meditatively. "You could tell Mrs. Marston you didn't mention having met me for fear I might have forgotten, and—" She stole a glance at his face; there was something sterner than disappointment in it now. "But I won't!" she cried, quickly. "One lie always calls for twenty to back it up! Oh, you needn't think it is because I am so very good. I hate bother, and fibs are always that."

She laughed; so did he, and his eyes were pleasant again.

"They don't pay," he said; "nothing cowardly ever pays."

"We are close to the square," Miss Fitzmaurice said, after a while, as they were passing through a narrow street. "The mews are just up yonder. I've a mind to leave the horses there. If one of the footmen should try to lead them round, he'd be sure to let them run away."

They rode to the stables, and Miss Fitzmaurice gave orders for one of the men to go out at once to Willesden and help the groom home. Then she gathered her riding-skirt in one hand, took Alderson's arm and walked on to the square.

"I wish I could ask you in to breakfast," she said, "but I don't suppose Lady Desborough is up yet."

"I had mine hours ago," he replied; "I should think it was time for luncheon. I shall have the pleasure of meeting you this evening at the Marstons'?"

"Oh, yes! You will see Lady Desborough, too—I am sure you will like her. She has been so nice to me—my own"—she had been about to invoke the recollection of that aunt whom she had not mentioned, but changed the term—"sister could not be sweeter—only, I never had one."

"Lady Desborough," repeated Alderson, in a musing tone. "I can't think what connection I have with the name—yet it sounds familiar! Certainly, her ladyship—isn't that what you say?—never was in America—at least, not in my part of the world."

They talked of other matters till they reached the house. As he gave the knocker a resounding pull, he exclaimed: "Now I know! I have heard an uncle of mine mention the name—not her ladyship—some man he knew here in Europe long ago—how he hated him!"

"Does your uncle live in California, too?"

"Oh, he died nearly two years ago. I never saw him but a few times. He used to be in the Austrian service when he was quite young—after that he entered our army, and got to be a colonel.

He was a fast lot, I believe. Poor chap, he saw a good many troubles before he died—but they say he was called handsome Jack Ralston to the last. Oh, you caught your foot in your skirt—you nearly fell—and you look dreadfully tired."

"A little, I believe." The door opened; she gave him her hand.

"Till this evening," he said.

Her lips moved with an effort. "Till this evening," she repeated.

VI

WHEN Miss Fitzmaurice was dressed for dinner that night, she took her pearls out of their case, began to fasten them about her throat, then took them off and sat for a few minutes thoughtfully regarding the exquisite ornaments. She saw her maid looking at her; as she laid the necklace back in its bed, and closed the lid, she remarked:

"I shall not wear it—this dress is too simple for anything but flowers. Give me that bunch of pansies; it must have cost twopence."

The shadow on her face gave place to a pensive smile as she glanced at her reflection in the mirror. Her gown was white, as usual, covered with embroidery, through which ran a faint thread of silver—only the fingers of Armenian women could have contrived to work such heavy decorations on material so diaphanous.

At the embassy dinner, and later at two balls, people said the changeable creature had blossomed into a new type of beauty. She seemed more girlish than ever, and her eyes had an expression like that of some wild thing which had not grown used to captivity.

When the guests were leaving the Marstons', an elderly army officer asked Alderson to go with him to his club. He had been agreeably impressed by the young man, and wished to hear about some engineering triumph on a California railway of which the ambassador had spoken. They spent a mutually pleasant hour, and, as they passed the open doors of a

smoking-room when they were making their departure, the officer saw some man to whom he wished to speak.

Alderson stepped just inside, and waited. Near him a group of young men were talking in elevated after-dinner voices. Alderson recognized one of them—an American who had come over on the same steamer, and for whom he had conceived a hearty aversion, though they had never exchanged words. Mr. Horace Leighton was a distant cousin of the Duchess of St. Aubyn, and no more unfavorable specimen of the dandy species ever idled away his time between Newport and European capitals. He was both fool and snob; his relationship to the duchess had afforded him introductions, and he had bought his way to tolerance by lavish expenditure. He had been this night the giver of a gorgeous dinner that had put the party in a somewhat excited condition, and he himself was rather more unsettled than any of the others.

He had met Miss Fitzmaurice in Washington, and he was the one person she had ruthlessly snubbed; she felt for him an antipathy so strong that she could not have subdued it had she tried.

"She came up like a meteor," he was saying in a shrill voice; "lucky if she doesn't go down like a stick."

"That's out of a book—didn't think you'd ever read one, *Small Hours*," one of his companions drawled. Some would-be witty person had first twisted his name into *Late One*, then into the sobriquet by which he was now so generally known that he had to pretend he liked it.

"A fellow from San Francisco said that a little while before this Fitzmaurice dawned on the world, a dancer disappeared from his town—Janie Fitzjeffrey. She had an old uncle, or something, who was always called *Old Fits* because he had epilepsy."

Straight up to the group strode Alderson, looking as dangerous as a young tiger.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," he said; "but I know there isn't an En-

glishman here who would allow a young lady to be slandered, when the damned lie can be set straight!" He was so quick in his speech and movements that before anybody could find breath, he drew a newspaper from a pocket of the long coat he wore over his evening suit, saying:

"I received this paper to-night—it is barely two weeks old." Then he read, rapidly:

"Pretty Janie Fitzjeffrey is more delightful this present engagement than ever—genius never settled in a daintier pair of feet than hers."

He handed the journal to the nearest man. "And it wasn't her uncle who was called Old Fits—it happened to be a distant relation of Mr. Leighton's. I've bought peanuts of him many a time when I was a boy, and last year I helped bury him because his rich relations would have let him die in the almshouse. He was an honest, hard-working old chap."

The hubbub of laughter was such as the club had seldom heard. Leighton took one step forward, but a glance at the stalwart figure opposite brought him to a standstill.

"Don't commit a murder, Small Hours!" somebody called.

"I beg your pardon again, gentlemen," pursued Alderson. "I'm not a society man, but I'll be very happy to give that young man satisfaction! I dare say there's an empty room in this shebang where I could polish him off as neatly as his best friend could wish, and you could all see that he had fair play."

"That's straight as a die!" "Small Hours, you're going to have the time of your life." "We'll see you through!" "Hip, hurray! Come on, everybody!"

A chorus of similar ejaculations followed; never in their Eton days had the group been more eager for a mischievous frolic, and the torture that Horace Leighton lived through during the next few moments was worse than the torment of the rack. He tried to bluster, but his declaration that countries in which duels were permitted

would be easy to reach, excited still louder shouts of laughter, and he soon retreated, muttering some feeble threat of sending a friend to settle preliminaries with his conqueror. The dandies would have made a hero of the Californian for the next hour if he had stayed, but he had accomplished all he wished, and took his departure.

By the time Lady Desborough and her charge reached the Marchioness of Hartby's ball, waifs from among the gilded youths had spread the story, and Miss Fitzmaurice received more adulation than ever. Before the night ended, she had two offers of marriage, which brought her count of declared suitors up to a round dozen. Mr. Tenby was so devoted and his mother so gracious that people believed it certain he meant to win the prize.

During the next three days, Isabel St. Aubyn was in bed with neuralgia, the duke furious over her cousin's behavior, and the Honorable Miss Stanmore doing her duty in the matter of advice and warning with a thoroughness peculiar to a connection by marriage—who was a religious woman to boot.

"I like that California young man of yours," Lady Desborough remarked, as she and her charge were driving home.

"He will never be anybody's young man," rejoined Miss Fitzmaurice. "The girl he chooses will have to be essentially his young woman. I like him, too, though he frightens me. He looks so strong and so frightfully honest—as if he never told a lie in his life, and never would forgive one."

"Then he'd better make arrangements to marry an angel! I wish to heaven he had thrashed Small Hours!"

"I don't—and I think it is dreadful for a girl to be discussed and talked about by clubmen."

"Bosh!" cried her ladyship, inelegantly. "Girls are like patent medicines—they must be advertised."

"And the duchess will dislike me more than ever! Oh, dear, she can't forgive my having seen her when she was seasick!"

"Stealing Tenby doesn't count! Do you mean to take him?"

"He hasn't asked me."

"Well, he will! I can tell you, his mother will make sure there is no mistake about the money."

"I don't want to marry anybody—you don't believe me, but it is true! Anyway, I can have no larger income till I am of age. I think I should like to go on the stage, or keep a Summer hotel in the Rocky Mountains. If I disappear some day you may know I have done one or the other."

During the next fortnight, the two ladies saw a great deal of Alderson, who was invited to various good houses, and might have gone out much more, had he chosen; but he said he came to London on business, and he was not a dancing man.

Horace Leighton went to Trouville for a week, and, when he returned, made people laugh by pretending that he had expected the Californian to follow him. Then he was coward enough to make civil advances, which Alderson received with the good-natured contempt a St. Bernard might have bestowed on a spaniel. Even the Duchess of St. Aubyn was courteous to the American; she believed he had known Miss Fitzmaurice on the other side of the water, and had a vague hope of beguiling him into some confidence which she might turn to her enemy's disadvantage.

To that young lady he was an object of more interest than any man she had ever met. His strength of character, his blunt honesty, his manner, so gentle that it brought a sense of protection—these attracted her; but a still stronger charm lay in her fear. She was not afraid of anything he could or would do, but she dreaded his condemnation, perhaps his scorn if he should ever learn—or did he know already? Thoroughly feminine as her nature was, it held a fairly masculine element of courage that inclined her to court danger, and suspense was to her the most unendurable of sensations.

One night, at a ball to which Lady Desborough had persuaded him to go,

they were sitting out a dance for which she had thrown over two partners.

"I shouldn't mind hanging," she said, abruptly, "half so much as I should the waiting to know whether or not I was to be hanged."

"I don't see how you got round to that."

"Nor I—something you said a while ago, I suppose, though I forget what it was. My mind always wanders about worse than the Wandering Jew. But don't you think the awfulest thing in the world would be to have something held over you?"

"I think the person who would torment another by holding it would deserve a harder punishment than hanging," he replied. "Nothing else could be so mean in its cruelty."

At that moment, Lady Desborough passed on the arm of some beribboned dignitary, and stopped to say a few pleasant words, patting her young friend's shoulder, and bestowing upon her an affectionate smile.

"I like that woman better than all your other fashionable women put together," Alderson said; "she hasn't outlived her heart."

For the first time in weeks, the girl remembered the letters she had safely locked up. She turned hot, then cold—it seemed to her she was looking with new eyes—his eyes!

"I am tired of sitting," she said, with a shiver; "they have gone into the conservatory, so we may go, too."

"I should think you would be glad to rest," he said, as they walked on. "You society girls work harder than draft horses."

"I'm not a society girl," she answered; "I'm just Jack Fitzmaurice."

"Like none of the rest of them, certainly, though you do seem so much at home. But the real you would be more so out on the prairies, racing a horse full tilt. When do you mean to go back?"

"I thought I meant to stay here," she rejoined, laughing; "people say so."

"And fulfil the American girl's ideal destiny? Ugh, how you would grow

to hate it—married to a conventional Englishman, and going round and round in a tea-cup with a coronet on it!"

"But suppose one was fond of its owner?"

"Then it couldn't be your Lord Edgar, nor your Mr. Tenby—though he is the best of the lot at bottom—he isn't very clever, but he's straightforward and honest. He might want a girl's money, but he would have to like her or he wouldn't take it."

"Oh, it is easy enough to like people!"

"Love, then—it's the only thing that makes marriage decent!"

She stopped short, and looked at him with one of her bewildering smiles.

"Where is she? Tell me about her—the girl you love, I mean."

"You take it for granted there must be one, since I haven't gone down into the dust before you, like all the other men?"

"But there is one!" she persisted.

"Yes," he said, slowly; "there's a girl stands between me and any other—even Miss Fitzmaurice."

"I am sure she will be very happy! Thank you for telling me—now we can be still better friends. Some day I want to hear about her."

She glanced about the brilliant room, oppressed by a vague sadness for the first time in all those entrancing months. Then she laughed.

"Well?" he asked.

"I've been in it!" she exclaimed. "I have enjoyed every moment; no matter what comes I shall have that to remember."

"What will come?"

"I suppose the coronet and the tea-cup! Now we must go back to difficulties. I am engaged three deep for this next dance."

Lady Desborough had dismissed her maid, and was seated in the blessed freedom of her *robe de nuit*, smoking a final cigarette. There came a low tap on her dressing-room door. As it opened at her summons, she called:

"What did you forget, Somers?"

"It's Jack who forgot something," said Miss Fitzmaurice, in her softest

voice. Before Lady Desborough could turn her head the girl was bending over the back of her chair. "It wasn't that I meant to be mean and cruel, Janet—it was just that I forgot all about them till to-night."

She dropped a packet in her friend's lap, and ran out of the chamber. Lady Desborough sat for a few minutes gazing at the thick, square envelope, then opened it, and spread a score of letters on the table. The paper on which they were written was yellow and worn; in many places the ink was almost obliterated by the stain of tears; out of one sheet fell a tiny curl of baby hair.

My lady read and re-read the pages—the letters of that girl dead so many years, whose ghost had kept the woman from growing utterly hard and worldly, and the passionate burst of weeping which followed fell on her tired heart like dew on faded roses.

VII

"He is the one man who would still want to marry me even if he knew I hadn't a penny in the world besides what I may happen to have lying at the bankers'," said Miss Fitzmaurice.

She made the remark to Mr. Tenby as they sat in Lady Desborough's morning-room. It was not her ladyship's day, but he had been admitted and been given strong tea, and had eaten several pieces of cake with that boyish appreciation of sweets noticeable in an Englishman, despite all assertions to the contrary. The hostess had been called away by a visit from her solicitor—she was as litigious as a Norman, and always had a lawsuit on hand.

Miss Fitzmaurice's remark had been occasioned by Mr. Tenby's reproaches because at a dinner on the previous evening she had allowed herself to be monopolized by the gentleman in question.

He was an elderly Italian prince whose mother had been an American, and for weeks past he had paid assid-

uous court to the young lady in the delightful fashion of which the men of his race are past masters.

"And he is charming—as sweet-tempered as a human being can be," pursued Miss Fitzmaurice, "and I believe in the proverb about its being better to be an old man's darling than—not that he is old, just the right age—forty-five. A man ought always to be that or eighteen."

"I don't believe you mean it," Mr. Tenby said, in his slow fashion.

"Mean to marry the prince? I shall have to wait till he asks me."

"He has—everybody knows that. I meant, you don't believe he is the only man who cares for nothing but your money."

"Naturally, my vanity assures me there is enough else to care about, but Italians don't need great wealth, as Englishmen do. And think of a dear old palace in Rome, one in Siena, and villas scattered broadcast, each more picturesque and uncomfortable than the others! If all those things would not turn an American girl's head, she must be made of—oh, what is the hardest wood in the world? Never mind—I hate being told things!"

"But you wouldn't think of marrying him."

"I am thinking of it this minute! Some time a girl must fulfil her natural destiny."

"But a foreigner!"

"Since I'm a foreigner in this land of fogs!"

"You're the most charming creature alive," he said, with a sudden glow in the eyes usually so calm and reflective. "It's rubbish about your money being the attraction. Of course, every fellow always needs more than he has, but it isn't that——"

He paused, partly from the habit of hesitating speech, partly because if he continued he was likely to go further than he intended to do at present. She regarded him with a gaze in which there were varied expressions to which he had no clue. There was a certain triumph in the situation for her. She knew better

than he that he was on the verge of a declaration. Yet a feeling of regret came over her. That bewildering, incomprehensible look dazzled him till he forgot prudence—the necessity for making sure that her reputed wealth was all real; he forgot everything save that he loved her—better than he ever had any other woman. Of that he was sure at this moment.

"You've known for a good while that I was awfully gone on you," he said, with as much earnestness as if he were talking blank verse instead of the slang habitual with his generation. "But it's more than that—I love you, and I'm not a bad sort. I've a good deal more heart than I choose to let most people know."

"Good gracious!" cried Miss Fitzmaurice. "What would *she* say if she heard all that?"

"She likes you. I never saw the *mater* so attracted by a girl——"

"I wasn't thinking of your mother," she interrupted, with a smile like that of a mischievous child.

"There's nobody else has a right to an opinion," he said, doggedly. "You may believe what I say—I'm an honest chap, anyhow."

"Well, I am honest, too," she replied, "and I won't take advantage of the fact that the strong tea is making you talk nonsense."

"Oh, I say—it isn't fair to treat a fellow like that! You know well enough I am in dead earnest! I love you awfully, Jack—there, I've been wanting to call you so for a month."

She laughed in his face, but so good-naturedly that he could be neither hurt nor offended.

"Don't laugh!" he begged.

"Do you want me to cry? Go home now, like a good boy, and get your head straight! We shall be as firm friends as ever, but don't talk such nonsense to me again—and, oh, don't scowl like that!"

She did not wish to lead him on. True, the prospective coronet shone in the distance, but even if she had dared to accept the offer thereof she knew that she could not have brought

herself to do it; yet, if she had exerted all her art to lure him into a downright proposal of marriage, she could not have succeeded so effectually as she did by her truthfulness.

"I am asking you to be my wife, and you call it nonsense!" he exclaimed. He had gone over the verge, and was glad that the excitement of the moment had forced him to do so, though when he had told Isabel St. Aubyn the night before that he meant to ask the question, he had not believed he should—so soon, at least. He remembered his mother's caution against precipitating matters, the necessity for clearer details in regard to the somewhat mysterious beauty, especially as to the amount of her fortune, but he had spoken, and he was, as he said, an honest man. Nothing could stop him now.

She sat looking at him in silence. She loved position, power; but the coronet was not for her wearing. She did not want it, yet she regretted the fact. She would have liked, at least, the glory of being engaged to its future owner, though she would have to throw him over or risk being thrown over herself. It is doubtful if in her recklessness the latter consideration would have deterred her, but there was a warm, generous heart under her odd combination of contradictory qualities, and she could not bear to hurt him or do him a wrong, because she saw at last that he was in earnest. He did love her, and he was straightforward and manly enough to make his love worth having.

"I think you might answer!" he said, almost roughly. "I have asked you a plain question: Will you marry me? Say yes, or no."

"No, then," she said; but in spite of herself her eyes were so full of regret that the refusal only encouraged him to continue:

"Is there any man you like better?"

"I don't believe there is one I like so well—at this moment."

"That is enough! I couldn't expect you to fall in love with a stupid chap like me as soon as I did with you—

but if you like me! Oh, Jack, Jack! say it is an engagement!" He tried to take her hands as he hurried on: "No fellow will ever love you better——"

The door opened. Isabel St. Aubyn entered so quickly that she heard the words, and saw his action.

She had been driving through the square, and had seen Tenby's cab; she knew she would find him at the house. The footman told her that Lady Desborough was engaged with her solicitor; Miss Fitzmaurice was in the morning-room——

"I will go up," the duchess said; "you need not come. Miss Fitzmaurice is expecting me."

"Oh, good morning!" that young lady cried, as smiling and calm as a May afternoon. "How good of you to come! You shall have some fresh tea as a reward—Mr. Tenby has drained the pot."

"They said Lady Desborough was here," returned the visitor, slightly confused; "I rushed in uncereemoniously because I had some news for her. What a dream that gown is, Miss Fitzmaurice! Oh, Mr. Tenby—is that you?"

"Unless I was changed in my cradle," he replied, turning sulky and dogged, instead of embarrassed, as most men would have been under the somewhat peculiar circumstances.

"I supposed you had already started for Scarsdale Towers. St. Aubyn just told me that the earl is very ill."

"Oh, that can't be! My mother is stopping with him, and would have wired me at once."

"The duke had a telegram, and he said there was one for you at the club."

Now Tenby was disturbed and anxious enough. He made his adieus hastily, managing to whisper to Miss Fitzmaurice a promise to write that evening. There was no sign in her face that she heard, but, low and quickly as he spoke, the duchess caught the words. The door closed behind him, and the two women faced each other—Miss Fitzmaurice still smiling, the eyes that searched hers dark with somber rage.

"It is no use to pretend I didn't see and hear," the duchess said, struggling to control herself, and managing a laugh that sounded tolerably natural. "Of course, I beg a thousand pardons. I was so eager to tell Janet—she and the earl are such warm friends! All the same, it was stupid to rush in like that. Still, on the whole, I am glad I did."

"So am I—on the whole," echoed Miss Fitzmaurice, sweetly. "I will ring for the tea. Such news always upsets one. You look quite down. I suppose you and the earl are great friends, too."

"I don't care a straw about the earl, and I don't want any tea!" The duchess was startled by the violence of her own voice. It reminded her of tones she disliked to remember—those of her grandmother, who had been troubled by a chronic hoarseness, which ill-natured people declared to have been brought on through over-strenuous crying of green vegetables in her early days.

"Perhaps a pick-me-up?" suggested Miss Fitzmaurice, in a tone of solicitude. "It is rather early, but you have lived in England long enough to fall into British ways. No? Then a cigarette—Lady Desborough's case is sure to be somewhere about. I think she keeps one in every room." She searched a table, and came back holding out a dainty gold box.

The duchess seated herself, glad of the momentary respite afforded by lighting a cigarette.

"Yes, I am glad I came in," she said, blowing blue rings into the air, and speaking in her most languid society accents. "We are quite old friends now, and I am enough older to offer you some good advice. Janet Desborough ought to have done it long ago, only she is too Irish to have any head. You need advice, if ever a girl did."

"Oh, it is so kind of you to take the trouble—it shows you really like me, and I was so afraid you did not!" cooed Miss Fitzmaurice. "Is it because I sat out two dances again last

night with Mr. Alderson? I know it isn't nice—but he always begs so hard, and it is so dull for him to stand about. But, indeed, I won't do it any more if you disapprove."

"Nobody could," returned the duchess, "especially as people say you were engaged to him before you left—California, was it? Some of those ill-natured club gossips—they are worse than old women—have started a report that you are his wife, and that he came over to look after you."

"How delicious! I must tell him! Who could have done it? I am sure it wasn't your cousin—Mr. Small Hours, isn't it?"

"I think you know what I mean," said the duchess, still able to retain her smooth, even tone, though she felt as if in danger of a rush of blood to her head. "If you are not careful you will make a very dangerous enemy—a woman who would not scruple to crush you. In your position, you cannot afford to run risks."

"An enemy for poor little me! Anyway, it isn't Lady Desborough, and it can't be you—that's one comfort."

"It is Lady Constantia Tenby, though I am not telling you news, I fancy, in naming her."

"And Gerald—I mean Mr. Tenby—what awful habits one falls into in this country!—was just saying she liked me hugely."

"I imagine you have had experience enough in life to know what dependence is to be placed on any declarations a young man may make a pretty girl."

"Well," said Miss Fitzmaurice, meditatively, "I have learned a good deal since that night I met you in Washington, but I fear I am still goose enough to believe people! Does Mr. Tenby tell falsehoods?"

"The most honorable man will talk nonsense when a girl encourages him—or when she does not, if the girl is as charming as you are," the duchess said, making a praiseworthy attempt to steady her tottering dignity. "I am speaking to you from kind motives, and I must speak plainly."

"It is so good—so good of you!" Miss Fitzmaurice's tone held a ring of sincerity that the other could not equal.

"You have turned Gerald Tenby's head for a while—no wonder!—but he owns a vein of hard common-sense at bottom. He might go crazy enough even to ask you to marry him, but his mother would not let the engagement go on."

She waited, hoping that, if he had already declared himself, natural vanity would impel the girl to reveal the fact; but she did not.

"Admitting that you are as rich as people say," the duchess went on, "I doubt if she would consent—at all events, not till she had sent to America, and rigorously searched out your antecedents."

She paused again to see if her listener showed the slightest sign of alarm. But Jack was still smiling, as she said:

"Dear auntie would, of course, come over here if it were necessary; but everybody knows I shall be rather poor till I come of age. I had only sixty thousand dollars to spend this year."

Such addition to Mr. Tenby's income would be acceptable, the duchess knew, especially with the possibilities suggested.

"You could not marry," the duchess answered.

Miss Fitzmaurice was at the end of her patience, but she remained outwardly gentle and innocent.

"He must marry somebody, sooner or later, you know," she said; "why shouldn't he marry me as well as another? I don't love him, so I shouldn't care about — things — and most women would."

On her way to the house, the duchess had driven through a street in which a crowd was watching a fight between two women. She had seen the assailant spring at her enemy's throat, and worry her tooth and nail before the tardy police arrived on the scene. For the instant, Isabel St. Aubyn wished savagely that she and this smiling creature belonged to a class which would have rendered possible to her a similar gratification of the prehistoric

instincts that lurk in every human being.

"He would be pleased to hear you say you don't care," she said, involuntarily tugging at her neck ribbon with a sense of suffocation.

"He would be so thankful to you for repeating it to him," her foe answered, in a tone of exasperating sweetness.

The duchess rose, saying quickly:

"I must go! I have done all I can. If you reject my advice, I fear you will bitterly regret it."

"I'm such a weak little thing!" sighed Jack. "I can't bear to say no to anybody! Dear duchess, you ought to have put in your veto weeks since. Do tell Mr. Tenby he must not be foolish any longer!"

The visitor quitted the room with all speed; she could not trust herself to remain another instant. She had gained nothing, and had shown her own hand completely. Oh, for some means of retaliation—of revenge! She could not stand impotent and see Gerald Tenby pass out of her life—she would not! She had loved him when a girl, but two seemingly strong lives then stood between him and his present position as heir to the earldom, and ambition had been more potent than love. She had married her elderly duke, and lived to feel every strawberry leaf in her coronet burn her forehead like a coal of fire.

The next morning, the newspapers announced the death of the old lord. Gerald Tenby was the Earl of Scarsdale.

VIII

On the following evening, Lady Desborough was giving one of her charming little dinners. As she went downstairs, she stopped in Miss Fitzmaurice's dressing-room. The girl turned her radiant face from the mirror, saying:

"You will actually be visible before any of the guests come. You are breaking your record!"

"And you have worn that gown

three times—which is breaking yours,” her ladyship retorted, laughing.

“That’s why I thought it nice and modest to wear it at home!”

It was the dress with the marvelous Armenian embroidery; Ralph Alderson said it was the prettiest frock she wore.

“And you haven’t worn any of your ornaments lately! Tommy Talcott christened you ‘Three Necklaces,’ you know! Put one on to-night, or somebody will say they are in pawn. You look as pretty as a picture, Jack; that changeable face of yours is worth more than regular beauty.”

Jack waved her a kiss, and, when she had gone, bade her maid unlock the safe, and bring her the necklaces. Save some beautiful rings, she never wore any other jewels, but she had not opened the boxes since the night she changed her mind about wearing the pearls at the embassy dinner. That was the evening after the accident which made her acquainted with Mr. Alderson. Now she regarded the three necklaces in turn, the wonderful pearls, the emerald collar and an ornament still more remarkable than either. It was a string of sapphires, curiously braided with opals and yellow diamonds, a double fringe of the jewels hanging below three black diamonds that fastened it at the throat. It was unique; no one could fail to notice it, and to remember it, too.

“I’ll wear this,” Jack said to herself. “I told him that waiting would be worse than hanging; I shall be certain at last.”

They were twelve at table; the Italian prince took Jack in, and Ralph Alderson sat opposite them. The two men did not glare at each other as some would have been likely to do, and, luckily for the American, his charge was an elderly woman who wanted the meal well advanced before she took time to converse. The prince spoke exquisite English—he was too thorough a gentleman to take liberties even with a language. Then, too, he liked Alderson, the more, perhaps, because Jack had once mentioned that he

was in love with a girl across the ocean. In his easy foreign fashion the prince commented on the necklace, and Jack turned full toward her other neighbor.

“Isn’t it odd?” she asked. “Did you ever see anything like it?”

“I don’t believe there ever was anything like it,” he replied, but his glance held neither surprise nor recognition.

“He does not know!” she thought. “Maybe, some time, I shall give it to him to take to that girl.”

This unknown person haunted Jack’s mind more frequently than was agreeable, and roused a vague dislike.

“They say it was stolen long ago from Spain,” she said, “and carried off to Mexico, and later stolen out of a convent there. Heaven knows what its adventures have been since.”

“It is barbaric,” rejoined Alderson.

“And I’m a savage,” said Jack, “so it suits me.”

Lady Desborough elected to have coffee served at table because she wished to smoke; Miss Fitzmaurice was the only woman who did not follow her example. Her ladyship always secured enough clever people to ensure pleasant conversation, and having a taste for sensational incidents in books or real life, she now led the talk to subjects which enabled her to beguile Alderson into reminiscences of California mountain life. Discussions in regard to feminine courage came up, and the prince, with the prejudices of his race, insisted that the quality was essentially unfeminine.

“The bravest thing I ever heard of was done by a very young girl,” Alderson said; and the hostess insisted on his telling the story.

“Two men were out prospecting with a party; I don’t remember whether it was in Montana or Nevada, but, at any rate, they got separated from their companions and were lost in the wilderness. When the others reached the settlement they expected to find the two there—but they had not appeared. News had just come that gold in quantities had been struck less than a hundred miles away, and the entire population hurried off, crazy as bears that

have knocked down a hornet's nest. There wasn't a man human enough to take time to look for the fellows that were lost."

"But a woman did?" Lady Desborough demanded, excitedly.

"This girl—she was related to one of the men. She started on her bronco, carrying provisions and three loaded revolvers, and she had a bloodhound with her—the only male Christian in the diggings. She rode two days, and at night camped in the forest. Late on the third day the dog got on the trail——"

"She was in time—say she was in time!"

"The men had taken shelter in a hut, and they were nearly starved. Their ammunition had given out, and that evening a party of half-breeds found them. They knew the two had gold-dust, and were hunting them. The men barricaded themselves in the hut; the devils were firing in on them, and were trying to set the logs on fire, when they were attacked from the rear. The shots came so fast and furious they thought there were half-a-dozen at least after them, and they rode off, pell-mell, too frightened to venture back later."

"It was the girl, of course?"

"It was the girl. But that wasn't all she did. One of the men—not her relation—had been so badly wounded that it was days before they could start back. Then she made him ride the pony, while she walked through the wilderness. The men said she was the only one of the three who never complained or lost heart."

When there was a lull in the chorus of admiring exclamations, Lady Desborough asked:

"What was her name? We must drink her health."

"That is just what I can't tell you—I wish I could," returned Alderson. "But I know the story is true; one of the men wrote it to me a good while afterward—that is, he began, but died of heart failure while he was writing. The unfinished letter was sent on to me."

"To the health of the unknown, then!" cried Lady Desborough. "Oh, Jack, Jack, did you ever hear anything so splendid! It makes one proud of being a woman."

"I hope she died," Miss Fitzmaurice said, her eyes blazing with excitement; "I hope so, indeed. Life after that would have been so commonplace!"

Several of the guests had to leave, and there was a general rising from the table.

"I hope she lived," Alderson said, in a low tone, as they stood side by side, "for I want to find her."

"And what would the other girl say to that?" Miss Fitzmaurice asked.

"She is the other girl," he answered.

IX

ANOTHER fortnight passed. July had come, and its heat and dust made the waning season's gaieties seem faded. The world in general looked more bored than ever; the awful monotony of social pleasures had become a burden; but Jack Fitzmaurice lost none of her vivacity or freshness, and had a fresh supply of gowns from Paris, to the disgust of her rivals, while even Lady Desborough's spendthrift soul was shocked by such extravagance, although it did include several artistic costumes for herself.

"I want to feel every moment that I am in it—in it!" Miss Fitzmaurice said, over and over to her friend, who had grown to love her with a warmth she had never thought any human being could again inspire in her heart.

"Positively, I feel ten years younger since I have had you with me," her ladyship said, one morning, as Jack was repeating her shibboleth. "It is as good as champagne to hear you dancing and singing about the house. I should miss you sorely if you took a freak to go to that aunt of yours—and you are full of freaks!"

In these days, Miss Fitzmaurice seldom mentioned that relative, and fewer letters came to her from America;

but Lady Desborough was too little given to reflection to think about it. "The day to the day" was her motto, and she never paused to remember that even yet she knew nothing whatever concerning her young friend's past.

"I am not thinking of going to anybody while you like to have me stay," was all Jack answered.

"That's all very fine, but how about those insane men? You will have to choose one of them. Which is it to be?"

"I must wait for one of them to choose me in earnest, like the modest girl I am."

"Nonsense! You have put Lord Edgar out of the running; you seem trying to make that little American widow give him a legal right to spend her money; but there are still enough, in all conscience, with the prince and Gerald at the head."

Jack only laughed.

"I never before saw a girl who wouldn't talk of her conquests," continued her ladyship, rather impatiently. "The prince has told me he has asked you twice, and I know Tenby—I can't remember to call him Scarsdale—sent you a letter the other day. If it hadn't been an offer you would have talked about it."

Tenby, in his letter, had indeed reiterated his straightforward proposal, and, besides, he had run up to town several times to see Miss Fitzmaurice; but she kept her own counsel, and he was no further advanced than on the morning when the duchess interrupted him at the crucial moment.

"Mr. Alderson is coming to ride with us," Jack said, instead of noticing her companion's remark.

"I am quite in love with him myself, and I wonder you are not! To be sure, there is the young woman in America, and you must marry a title; it is your manifest destiny! Of course, there's nothing like an English earl—unless it is a duke—and it is too late for Isabel St. Aubyn to bother. But the prince isn't an every-day foreigner, and—Jack, I shall box your ears if you

sit there laughing in my face! You've got to think—to make up your mind."

"And there's the stage and the Summer hotel! But I needn't make up my mind yet—not yet."

The girl's reckless thoughtlessness was one of her most prominent characteristics. She had never yet acted from a deliberate plan; her daring ventures had been the result of sudden impulses, and she had left details to be settled by the exigencies of the moment. A thirst for excitement, a wild longing to know what the great world was like, a passionate yearning for adventure—these had been the dynamic influences in her brief career. Of late, she had kept reflection aloof more determinedly than ever; something restless and disturbing had stirred deep down in her soul, though she refused to recognize its insistence. When she landed in England, she had taken it for granted that a grand marriage would be her portion, but she had not dwelt on the idea; she was as little dazzled by its advantages as she was troubled by the difficulties that must present themselves when such a consummation became imminent. Pleasure, excitement, to live each minute to the full, to be "in it"—these were the longings that inspired her, and no child playing with fire could have been more blind to consequences or more thoughtless of wrong-doing. She was a born actress, but whatever part came up she entered into it so completely that she was not acting. Neither past nor future counted; the present absorbed her so completely that nothing else was real; everything that had gone before was as much a dream as the possibilities beyond. Save as a vague contingency, the idea of marriage had repelled her; no wild creature of the forest could have felt a more fiery necessity for freedom. The thought of bondage, of being unable to carry out any passing whim, even if it should involve breaking away from her surroundings and rushing to the ends of the earth, was positively abhorrent to her.

She did not wish to decide anything;

she wished to float on in the enchanted Summer hour, as careless that it must end as the ephemera dancing in the sun.

"I have changed lately," she said, abruptly, to Ralph Alderson, as they rode on further in advance of Lady Desborough and her cavalier than they ought to have done. "I believe it is your fault—you have such a dreadful way of putting things; and you say things you have no business to—things nobody else thinks! You are worse than a conscience—that, thank goodness, was left out of my composition."

She had fallen into the habit of saying anything to him that entered her head; sometimes she found an odd pleasure in forcing him to express opinions that stung her like needle pricks, and sometimes she tried to hurt him or make him angry; but she never seemed to succeed in doing either, though he scolded her without ceremony. They had seen each other daily for weeks; Lady Desborough told him that nobody but the milkman was so regular or so welcome. Besides visiting so constantly at the house, he appeared to have imbibed a taste for society, and found leisure to follow the two ladies in their nightly rounds. His opening success had been aided by a report that he was rich, and, indeed, he spent money freely enough, though he courted nobody, and neglected invitations in a shameless manner unless they ensured his meeting Miss Fitzmaurice.

"I know what is the matter," he said. "The old gutta-percha bowl is beginning to shrink; it will be only a tea-cup presently, and you'll have to get out of it or choke to death."

"I sha'n't and I won't get out of it!"

"You will be as rude pretty soon as if you were a society girl," he said, with one of his gay laughs, in which she joined.

"I should like to know what I am, if not a society girl," she answered.

"You're a bird of the woods that has flown into a cage to see what it is like. So long as the door is open you don't mind staying."

"Well, nobody can shut it on me."

"Nobody but yourself. You would do it if you were to marry any one of those fellows."

"I have as much right to marry as any one else. You yourself expect to some day—if you ever find the young woman with the three revolvers."

She teased him frequently about the heroine of the adventure he had related at Lady Desborough's dinner, and made disparaging remarks as to her appearance when she got out of the wilderness. That evening had convinced her she could wear any or all of her odd ornaments without rousing question in his mind; yet, somehow, she found no consolation in the fact, and she found herself oftener and oftener looking at matters through his eyes. She had vaguely disliked the girl to whom she had at first thought he was engaged; now she felt a certain envy of the idealized creature who held so deep a place in his fancy—whom he would never find! He was so resolute, so persistent, that he was capable of searching for years, refusing to let any other woman fill the heart he held in reserve for that realization of his ideal. And he was a man many women could have loved. There was more than one such, Jack knew, in that world of fashion in which he had paused momentarily, through curiosity rather than liking. He remained blind to signs of favor in various quarters, though Jack, with her feminine intuitions quickened by feelings for which she did not try to account, saw them clearly enough. In his own time he would go away—go back to his work which was dear to him, to his free life within sound of the soft lap of the Pacific, to his dream and his search for the girl he would never find. And she—Jack—it was not necessary yet to think; the time for decision must come—but not yet. He would go away; in any case, he would not have dreamed of bestowing his love on her; and if he had, he was the last man to whom she would have dared listen! Between her and the girl who was his ideal there could be no shadow of likeness. She was only Jack Fitz-

maurice, and between Jack and Alderson a great gulf was fixed—wider than the continents and their oceans—deep as death and infinity.

Later in the day, Jack and Isabel St. Aubyn chanced to be seated side by side at a private concert. Under cover of the music, the duchess said:

"I was told by somebody who knows, that Lady Constantia Tenby has had her solicitor write to a man in Colorado."

"Does she want to buy mining stocks?" Jack asked.

"Perhaps she is making inquiries about yours."

"I'm such a stupid little thing that I don't know much about them myself," Jack said, with her gurgling laugh.

"I dare say you don't," sneered the duchess.

"But I do know there are a lot I could have sold to her if she wants to invest," pursued Jack; "the trustees said it was better not to have too much in any one thing."

"Faith in one's impudence carrying one through, for instance?"

"I do wish you wouldn't hate me so," said Jack; "there really isn't any reason. I might have told you so much a good while ago, only, you have been so awfully ill-natured."

"I thought you hated useless lies."

Since the day of their word duel, it had been a slight comfort to the duchess to speak her mind when she and Jack were free of listeners.

"I don't mean to marry any man at present; why can't you believe it?"

"Then it's because you don't care," said the duchess.

Jack laughed again. "The man I wanted to believe me would do it in spite of the whole world; but it would be too much trouble to make believe being in love."

The duchess laughed in her turn, but not so pleasantly as Jack had done.

"You can deceive most people," she said; "but you must know you can't deceive me. I wonder you take the trouble."

"It is you who insist on deceiving

yourself where I am concerned," Jack replied. "If you would believe what I say you would save lots of bother—such useless bother!"

The duchess began to lose her temper. "Maybe not—for you."

"You can't make me any," returned Jack, her perfect good-nature giving her words an additional significance which was most exasperating. "You can only bother yourself and——"

"Oh, finish! I thought you were never afraid of saying anything you wished! You and I need not stop at trifles."

"It would sound only ill-tempered, and as I am not so it would be foolish to let you think I am."

She gave a little wave of her fan, as if sweeping the subject away as one too trivial on which to waste further speech.

"I wish," said the duchess, between her teeth, "oh, how I wish you and I could be men for a little while!"

"Great Scott!" Jack exclaimed.

"I'll go to Belgium with you to-morrow and fight it out, if you like! I know Janet Desborough would act as my second—she'd enjoy a row—pistols and twenty paces! But is it Lord Scarsdale we are to fight about? I like things made clear."

"You are certainly the most insolent girl alive!"

"I can't be, dear duchess; I haven't had the advantage of several years' wearing of a coronet! Is that thing they are playing from Wagner? Oh, they are stopping! I told Janet this morning I was undecided as to a title, the stage, or keeping a Summer hotel in the Rockies."

The necessity for decision loomed nearer than Jack dreamed.

X

Two days passed. The third morning Lady Desborough woke much earlier than usual, and, finding it impossible to go to sleep again, rang for her maid to bring her some tea. She

drank two cups strong as wine, nibbled a bit of toast, and smoked a cigarette. By that time, her tired nerves were pleasantly stimulated. She sat up among her pillows, and began looking over the newspapers.

"*Sapristi!*" she exclaimed, coming on a paragraph that somewhat startled her. She read it a second time, darted out of bed, threw a dressing-gown on, and hurried down the hall to Miss Fitzmaurice's apartments.

That young lady sat before her mirror, glowing from her cold bath, her eyes as brilliant and her color as fresh as if she had gone to rest at nine o'clock instead of three in the morning.

"Has the bottom fallen out of the world?" she called, in astonishment, as her maid opened the door at an impatient knock, and Lady Desborough dashed into the room.

"I knew you would be up—you are such a shamelessly early bird! I want to ask you something."

"You may go, Coralie; I'll finish doing my hair," Miss Fitzmaurice said, a rapid glance showing her that her friend was disturbed. "Has anything unpleasant happened?" she asked, as soon as they were alone.

"How much money have you lying at Stringers'?" Lady Desborough demanded, anxiously.

"Oh, about three thousand pounds! How much do you want?"

"No, no! it isn't that. It's like you to offer, though! My dear, I am afraid the money is lost. Stringers' bank has failed—one would almost as soon have expected the Bank of England to go! I hope—oh, I do hope you won't be much inconvenienced!"

Jack Fitzmaurice's face was hidden by the heavy masses of her beautiful chestnut hair. Her nimble fingers did not pause, however, and there was scarcely an instant's hesitation before she answered, laughingly:

"What a lark! I shall have to cable at once to auntie. She is sure to scold as dreadfully as if it were my fault!"

"Well, you needn't read her letter—that's one comfort! And it doesn't

matter? Lord, what it must be to walk about a millionaire! It seems an awful lot to lose, though! I was as frightened at first as if I had heard your whole fortune was gone. I declare, if it had been, I should be goose enough to insist on your staying. I didn't believe I could grow so fond of any creature as I am of you."

"That's the Irish in you, my dear; you'll have a heart if you live to be ninety!"

Lady Desborough rushed at once into her highest spirits, and talked gaily while Jack went on composedly arranging her hair.

"I must go and get dressed," her friend said, at length. "I have to go out early. There is that awful meeting about the trouble in the club, and Lady Constantia is coming up to town for it. She will never forgive me if I am behind time."

Left to her solitude, Jack Fitzmaurice calmly finished dressing. She got out a street gown—one of her prettiest—and selected her most becoming hat. Then she locked the door, and took up some letters she had received by the early post. The first one she opened was a communication from her bankers, and it confirmed Lady Desborough's tidings. They hoped to pay a certain percentage later, but the disaster was so sudden that for the present they were utterly crippled.

The necessity for a decision had arrived. On one hand ruin confronted the girl, a loveless marriage on the other. The prince was obliged to return to Italy at once. He intended to come back, and had insisted that she should take the weeks of his absence for consideration before deciding that her refusal was irrevocable. If she sent for him that morning and told him that her entire fortune had been swept away, he would still be eager to marry her. If she chose, a special license would render it easy for her to leave London with him the next day, the Princess di Ferrati; the haste and privacy would be regarded as one of her whims, and would make a sensational ending to her season of triumph.

Many women of more fixed principle and a far-keener sense of right and wrong would have snatched at this consummation; but she could not do it. She did not waste time in reflection, nor was she troubled by regret because she must throw away the last gift destiny was likely to offer her.

She had twenty-five hundred dollars left in America; she had some three hundred pounds lying by her, and not another penny in the world. If she chose, she could arrange while town was still full to appear at a *matinée* in a play with which she was familiar, and make the occasion her professional *début*. She would succeed, too—she knew that. But the tyranny and tedium of the stage were abhorrent to her; she rebelled as utterly against slavery to the public as against the servitude of a marriage without love. She did not reason, or weigh advantages, or contemplate the uncertainties, the struggles, the privations which might lie before her. She was not cast down; she felt the glow of excitement a brave soldier might on the eve of battle; there was a positive fascination in this new phase of existence. She was sorry to leave Janet; she would have liked more balls, more conquests, more social successes; but lamentations over the inevitable were foreign to her nature.

She had a great deal to do; there was no time to waste in thought or consideration, and if there had been it would not have occurred to her to devote her energies to either. Her plans started up, full-formed, without conscious volition, and she prepared to carry them out unhesitatingly. When her maid came, she said to her:

"Coralie, I am going to send you to Paris with Mrs. Anstrey. Her maid has left her without warning, and she is obliged to go over by to-night's boat. She is so weak and miserable that she is not fit to travel alone."

She had grown attached to the girl, and wished to secure her a good mistress, knowing that the invalid lady would be only too glad when she learned

later that the temporary arrangement could be made permanent.

"If Lady Desborough and I conclude to go to Trouville, you may join me there," she continued; "therefore, take all your things, for it would not be worth while to journey back here for so short a time."

She had several of her own trunks packed, on the plea that it would be better to get the things out of her way; then she sat down and wrote two letters—one to the prince, the other to Lord Scarsdale. She told the former that he must accept her refusal of his hand as irrevocable, and her second letter was equally distinct and decided. She smiled, in her whimsical fashion, as she looked at the superscriptions with their fine-sounding titles. She rather wished she could have cared for the Italian enough to marry him; still, she felt no more regret in throwing away chances of *grandeur* than a child would in breaking soap-bubbles.

Her face did grow grave when another man intruded himself into her thoughts. She had been trying to keep him aloof, but she could not. She had something to do where Ralph Alderson was concerned, and it would be the most difficult task she had ever undertaken. She tried to write to him also, though she did not mean to have him receive the letter until she was gone. The repetition of that last word gave her a little, indefinable chill. She tore up the page, in one of those impulsive moments which were as potent as the influence of some power extraneous and invisible, and which had ruled every important action of her life. She would go and secure her steamer passage; then she would send for him. It would be cowardly to write. She would tell him the truth, face to face, and— She stopped short in her reflections, ran to her safe, and took out the jewel-boxes.

"I never was afraid of any human being," she thought, "and I won't be afraid of him. I am, though—I am!—but I'll do it all the same!"

She could not wait; she would drive

from the steamer office to his hotel, and send up for him. If anybody should see her it could not matter now. The thought made her laugh—the ringing laugh of a child just old enough to enjoy some unpardonable bit of mischief it meant to perpetrate.

The boxes would not fit into the little bag she carried at her side, so she laid the necklaces in as carelessly as if they had been trumpery trinkets instead of representing a value that was a small fortune.

So much time had passed that she found Lady Desborough had gone out in the carriage. She ordered a brougham from a stable near, told Coralie she should probably go to Mrs. Marston's to luncheon, and bade her lay out a gown for the evening. There was to be one of the latest large dances of the season at some great house—her last ball. And again she laughed in her reckless fashion.

Miss Fitzmaurice would depart as unceremoniously as she had arrived; there would come a cable despatch from her aunt, summoning her home. But it would not arrive until morning, on account of Janet, who would be in despair at her departure. Therefore she would leave the tidings till the last moment possible, for Janet represented friend, home, family, as Ralph Alderson had of late stood in the place of a conscience.

She drove to the shipping office; the French steamer would touch at Southampton on the evening of the following day, bound for New York. She secured a modest state-room, very unlike the luxurious quarters she had inhabited on her outward voyage; but she paid two passages in order to have it to herself.

Then she gave the order to drive to Alderson's hotel. She knew he would be in, for he had told her the night before that he had business letters to write which would occupy him all the morning. Nevertheless, he was coming down the steps as she drove up. He hurried forward, and put his hand in at the open window to give hers a hearty grasp.

"The luckiest thing in the world!" he cried, joyfully. "I was just going after you! Let me help you out. Come right up-stairs—"

"You horrible savage! What if some of our grand acquaintances heard you!" she interrupted. "Do you think we are out in a California settlement?"

"I wish we were," he said; "we have both pretty nearly exhausted all the fresh air we brought over in our lungs, and there is none to be got here! Only fancy how a mountain village must look this morning!"

A swift vision rose before her eyes, with him standing in the midst, and beside him, not she, Jack Fitzmaurice, but his dream-girl, brave, true, honest as he believed her—the girl whom he could never find—who was only a phantom—the ideal that had no reality.

He had opened the door, and was offering her his arm.

"You wouldn't be so slow if you knew the surprise waiting for you," he said. "Oh, please do hurry a little, instead of sitting there looking away off into the woods!"

"What do you want me to do? You don't expect me to come in? I never heard anything so shocking. Why, I think I should like it! Only, fancy all the grantees' faces!"

"Not only in, but up to my rooms—they are there waiting till I bring you to be rejoiced over! I won't tell you a word more—come! There's an elevator, thanks to us Americans. This way."

"But I have something very important to tell you!" she cried, stopping short as she remembered her errand.

"You can tell me at Hampton Court—we are going there after we have had luncheon. And, oh, how you do waste time! Then to dine at Richmond."

In a few minutes, Jack found herself in his sitting-room, face to face with Mr. and Mrs. Fenton. They had decided, in true American fashion, to sail the day after the idea of a short trip abroad occurred to them, had reached London the night before, and come this morning to give a surprise to Ralph

Alderson, who was a favorite relative of the secretary's wife. They were delighted to meet their former protégée, whom they thought lovelier than ever, and there followed one of those enjoyable times when a knot of reunited friends all talk at once, and nobody seems to listen, though everybody hears what the others say.

"But we are losing time!" Alderson said, at length. "We are going on a regular sight-seeing spree, Miss Jack, before people get hold of these two. You'd never have seen anything if it hadn't been for me!"

"But I must let Lady Desborough know, and I must get back in time for the ball. I have three other engagements, but I'll throw them over."

"Mr. Fenton has an errand to do. I'll take him, and then go to her ladyship. Luncheon will be ready by the time we get back, and you two ladies will have a chance for a powwow while we are gone."

Thus Alderson settled things in his energetic way, and dragged the secretary off as unceremoniously as if he had not helped to rule the destinies of a nation, leaving Mrs. Fenton to caress Jack and exult over her triumphs. The girl was genuinely glad to see her friend, but now and then as they talked of their first meeting she could not help looking at many things with Ralph Alderson's eyes, which caused them to assume a coloring it troubled her to contemplate.

XI

As Alderson neared Lady Desborough's house, he saw a four-wheeler before it into which a girl was stepping whom he would have thought Miss Fitzmaurice had he not left her in his own rooms. It was Coralie departing. At the last moment, an accident had happened to her dress, and she had hastily changed it for one among several that her mistress had that morning bestowed on her. It was a checked silk of two shades of blue, much finer than the

Frenchwoman wished to wear for traveling, but it lay convenient in the top tray of one of her boxes, and the cab had already come. Her height was the same as her mistress's, and her slight figure looked strikingly similar, clad in the stylish gown which had struck Alderson's fancy when Jack wore it.

The resemblance was noticed by other eyes than his. The Duchess of St. Aubyn's carriage, coming from the opposite direction, had halted till the cab got out of the way. The duchess had seen Coralie, and, too, the name Fitzmaurice on an American trunk, which had been another of the girl's gifts from her lavish mistress.

"So you are an early visitor, also!" the duchess said, pleasantly, as Alderson came forward when her carriage drew up at the entrance. "You need not hate me, however. I want to see Lady Desborough a moment; you can have Miss Fitzmaurice to yourself."

The footman had been out, and supposed that both ladies were in the house, so the visitors went in. Presently, he appeared to announce that neither of them was at home, but he believed her ladyship was expected soon. The duchess decided to wait, and the servant departed. Alderson mentioned his errand, and said he would write a note of explanation for Lady Desborough. So he wrote, explaining the circumstances clearly, and adding that, though they might not return till late, Miss Fitzmaurice would be back in time to dress for the ball.

The duchess watched him absently as he wrote and sealed his note, thinking all the while of the girlish figure that entered the cab on the top of which she had seen the labeled trunk. She wished Alderson a pleasant day; he bade her good morning, pulled the bell, and went out. The footman had not reached the hall so that he could be told of the note. Alderson did not wish to lose another moment, and, with true masculine carelessness, decided that it did not matter. Lady Desborough was sure to see it, and, of course, the duchess would mention it.

The bell had not rung. It was a little out of order, like a good many things in her ladyship's house. Alderson had left the room door ajar, so that the duchess knew he had let himself out of the house. She sat for a few seconds eying the note; then she took it from the table, and stood lost in thought. How many hours there were between one o'clock and eleven at night! If Miss Fitzmaurice should remain absent until then, without any one in the house knowing where she had gone; if somebody should mistake the girl in the cab for her mistress, or see the trunk with its label; if— The duchess thrust the note into her pocket, and pulled the bell so hard that it brought the footman in haste.

"I cannot wait for Lady Desborough," she said. "I would like to speak to Miss Fitzmaurice's maid."

But the maid had driven away a few minutes before to take the Dover train. Any message her grace might leave—

"It is of no consequence," the duchess said. "If I do not meet Miss Fitzmaurice somewhere, I will write to her."

Within two hours a report spread from club to club that something mysterious had happened in regard to the famous American heiress. How the story started, or who was responsible therefor, no mortal could have told, but Jonah's gourd was a plant of slow growth compared to the rapidity with which club gossip will grow into a wide-stretching upas tree.

At scores of five-o'clock teas the matter was discussed, but by that time the varying stories had settled into one, concerning the truth of which there could not be a shadow of doubt. Miss Fitzmaurice had been seen to take the Dover train—whether to escape from the multitudinous debts which it appeared she left, or to elope with Colonel Claxton, was a point on which people differed; but most persons inclined to the latter belief. Everybody knew now that the dashing ex-army man, with an unsavory reputation and a wife from whom he had separated, had been

hanging about the popular beauty, much to Lady Desborough's distress and anger. Indeed, her ladyship had been heard to say that Miss Fitzmaurice must leave her house unless the intimacy ceased at once.

The duchess paid a good many visits that day, and heard numberless repetitions of the tale; but she was one of the last to give it credence. However, she finally came to believe it was true, and she drove to see Lady Constantia Tenby, who had that morning come back to her town house to pass a few days.

Recent as her mourning was, the elasticity of modern opinion enabled her ladyship to see her acquaintances, and she had been overwhelmed with visits, and had worn her patience threadbare with denials that an engagement existed between her son and Miss Fitzmaurice. She happened to be alone when the duchess was announced, and was indulging in a mental thanksgiving that her prudence had kept Gerald from going to the length of a proposal. She had welcomed and encouraged his fancy for the girl, because it had freed him from Isabel St. Aubyn's witcheries; but she had no intention of allowing matters to go further until she had satisfied herself of the stability of the reputed fortune. But the duchess speedily changed her thanksgiving to sensations akin to despair.

"He has proposed to her," she said. "He told me so—he has done it in writing, too. Of course, it will be in all the papers to-morrow morning. There are hints already in to-night's journals."

Lady Constantia was nearly insane with rage and grief, but was strong-minded enough to put both by until she had done everything that lay in her power. Her son was at their Twickenham villa; she telephoned him to come to her at once, not scrupling to add that the story of the American's financial ruin and elopement was in everybody's mouth. She begged her dear Isabel to stay and see him, too—he was such an obstinate creature that every possible influence must be brought to bear on him.

Lord Scarsdale's frame of mind was desperate enough when he reached town, but his anger at the slanders turned to acute distress when he was told at Lady Desborough's—where he first went—that her ladyship was ill in bed, and Miss Fitzmaurice absent since quite early in the morning. He drove to his club, but on the steps met an elderly friend whose word he could trust, and learned so many particulars that he had no wish to face any acquaintance just then. He got into his cab again, and hurried to his mother's house, to be met by the duchess, as the two ladies had agreed.

Of late, such meetings had usually proved very unpleasant; he had been treated to moods that varied from plaintiveness to reproach, and felt himself an injured individual, as men have a way of doing when a woman "will not let things rest after they are settled." However, at their last interview, the duchess had entrenched herself behind the claims of friendship—theirs must not be broken; and under the shelter of that bulwark she spoke and acted now.

"Oh, Gerald! you have heard—I see by your face! There is no one who can be so grieved for you as I am."

"I don't believe the infernal stuff," he said, spurred on to an assertion which in his heart he could not accept.

"I tried not to—for your sake—as long as I could doubt! There is only one thing for you to do—you must deny the engagement—"

"Do you think I am going to lie? I asked her to marry me. She has my letters, saying I considered it an engagement, though she refused to do so."

He held to the same resolution when his mother's prayers were added to the duchess's entreaties. People might laugh—what did he care? Behave like a cad he would not! Then Lady Constantia vowed she would write to the papers, if he did not, and he knew that she never stopped at anything when her mind was made up. His swearing that he would never speak to her again had no effect. She

knew he was incapable of carrying out the threat, and he, too, knew it.

"Write, then—break the engagement," the duchess said, and his mother joined in that plea.

He was as helpless in their hands as a kind-hearted man usually is in those of two determined women, especially when one is his mother and the second a woman whom—well, to whom he ought to be good-natured if he can. Lady Constantia positively went on her knees, but she was sorry as soon as she had done it, for the getting up was not easy to a person of her dimensions. She vowed that she never would rise until he promised, and finally a compromise was reached. He would write if she would agree not to send any word to the cursed newspapers.

"But if they say you were engaged to her, some action will be necessary," the duchess imprudently urged.

"I won't lie to please anybody," he retorted, sullenly, "and I don't care a—rush what people say."

The duchess was wise enough to add nothing more, and found a little consolation in the expression of Lady Constantia's face, which assured her that that energetic person would find ways and means to set the matter clearly before the world. She persuaded her son to write his letter then and there, and with her own hands gave it to a servant to post.

Gerald got away as soon as possible, and his mother was profuse in thanks to her dear Isabel—she called her so once more, forgetful of the day when she had flung a very dreadful epithet at her. Perhaps the duchess forgot also, or perhaps, in her amiability, reflected that under stress of rage and maternal anxiety great ladies will sometimes revert to antiquated words which could hardly have been considered elegant English, even in the free-spoken days of Queen Elizabeth.

Isabel St. Aubyn had gained all she had hoped for, and it was a good deal. True, before midnight, Jack Fitzmaurice's appearance at the Townley ball would strangle the slander, but she was not a girl to forgive Gerald's

letter. Besides, scandal is never so effectually stifled that a little breath does not remain. From this time forth there would be rumors that there was something mysterious about the radiant creature who had dawned on society with the suddenness of an Eastern morning—coming from nobody knew where, concerning whom it was plain that even Lady Desborough knew less than was desirable, in spite of her stout championship.

XII

"AND there was something you wanted to tell me—very important, you said. There's a chance to do it now."

"I suppose I might as well, and get it over," Jack replied. "I had made up my mind I would wait."

"Waiting is never wise," Ralph Alderson interrupted, in his masterful fashion—masterful, in spite of its gentleness.

The two were strolling along one of the shady alleys of Bushy Park. They had done their duty by the palace, and, after walking about for a while, Mrs. Fenton declared herself tired, and bade the young pair walk on while she and her husband sat down in an arbor to rest. She watched the two figures, so lithe and youthful, so full of life and vigor, and presently said:

"Oh, I hope—I do hope they will——"

"So do I," rejoined the secretary; "or I would, only just now I am too drowsy to hope anything! How do people manage to keep awake in this sleepy English air?"

He settled himself, and went comfortably into a doze, while his wife sat weaving those vicarious dreams for the young, in which elderly folk are given to indulge, and which make a very pleasant substitute for the personal visions that have died out.

"Let's sit down on this bench and have it over," Ralph said.

Jack yielded to the pressure of his hand on her arm, and, for a mo-

ment, remained gazing wistfully through the sun-flecked shadows. They would never sit there together again, she was thinking—neither there nor anywhere else! What she had to tell must end the dearest friendship she had ever formed. He was too stern in his terrible honesty to forgive her conduct, even to comprehend how a human being could yield to temptation of any sort. She had no excuse to offer; she would not have urged it if there had been any to urge. The weakness of trying to extenuate motives or plead for mercy was not in her nature. She would tell the bare, bald truth, and be done. It would be hard to bear the condemnation of his eyes, but she must, and he would speak no harsh words—perhaps would leave her in silence, as a sign that she had passed out of his life forever.

He watched her till his face grew troubled; a sudden questioning dread started up in his mind. Could it be that even to her, untamed and untamable creature, the allurements of title and position had proved too potent—that she meant to commit the unpardonable crime of selling herself as ordinary girls were doing every day? He could not believe it.

"I know you don't mean to tell me you are going to marry either of those men," he said; "you couldn't if you tried."

"I did try," she answered; "I did—not the Englishman, though he's good at bottom—but the other. He is a man of whose love any woman might be proud, and he would take me even after—after—but I can't! Oh, that dreadful name you called such a marriage!"

"It wasn't my word that stopped you—it was your real self!"

"Don't!" she said. "It's just as bad, you will think—worse, maybe—but I mean to tell! I'm a fraud! There—a fraud!"

"Well, that doesn't tell much—I don't think it means much."

"Doesn't it?" she cried, looking at him with eyes like those of a child too courageous to plead against the pun-

ishment it deserves. "I'm not a great heiress—I haven't any aunt or anybody belonging to me. I had an uncle, but he is dead, and I told Lady Desborough that your uncle was mine—that was what startled me so when you spoke his name that first day!"

She hurried out the somewhat unintelligible confession in a breath, then leaned back and shut her eyes, waiting for his voice to deal the blow from which she did not mean to shrink any more than she meant to plead against its justice.

But he did not speak; he drew a long breath, and, when she looked up, his face was turned away.

"It didn't take long to tell," he said, in his ordinary tone, but there was a light in his eyes which would have puzzled her had she caught it.

"Why don't you say you despise me, and be done!" she cried, impatiently. "I said it plainly enough—you needn't try not to believe me! I said I had sixty thousand a year. So I had, but it was only for one year, and it's all gone! I am going back to America. I have enjoyed every minute. I can't help what you think—I'm not going to deny it! I said I'd have one year worth a long life, and I've had it. Getting ready was just as much fun as all these heavenly months! I vowed I would be in it—in it—and I have been, if ever a girl was!"

"I should think so!" he answered, with a little laugh.

"I'd bear a scolding, but I won't tolerate your contempt!" she cried, passionately. "I know you despise me, but you may keep it to yourself! I'm not ashamed—I'm not a bit ashamed! I suppose I haven't been honorable, but I've been honest. I don't owe anybody a penny—I've paid my way!"

"I should think you had," he said. He was looking at her now, gravely enough, but there was neither condemnation nor contempt in his face. "Lady Desborough told me all about that, and all the things you have done for other girls! Honest? Well—yes."

Her hand chanced to touch the bag at her side.

"Oh, I forgot! All but one thing. But I meant you should have them some time—I did!"

She opened the bag, and laid the three necklaces on the bench between them. He sat regarding the glittering heap in bewildered astonishment.

"They are yours. Now, take them and be done, then everything will be off my mind—and, oh, I'm glad to have it over!"

"You are the craziest girl alive!" he exclaimed. "What the dickens are you carrying those trinkets about for? Suppose somebody had stolen your bag? Why, they are worth thousands of dollars!"

"That's what he said—your uncle, I mean—and I was to give them to you. The pearls were your mother's; the rest he took once for a bad debt. They were all he had left, poor old dear! Oh, he was the kindest creature! I didn't mean to steal them, but I didn't know where you were, and they were so lovely to have while I played princess! So now put them in your pocket, and be done."

"Well, I think they'll be rather safer there than dangling at your belt," he answered, as he deposited the jewels in the inside breast-pocket of his coat. "Give me a pin!"

She handed him one, watched while he secured it carefully, then started to her feet.

"That's all!" she said. "That's the last of the Copper Princess! Now, let's go back to that dear old pair. You've been better to me than I thought you could—I hoped you would make me angry, so that I could hate you a little, just for a while."

He caught her arm, and forced her to sit down.

"I vow to goodness, I should like to shake you! Do you suppose you are going to run off like a young quail? You haven't told anything, and you must—the whole story."

"Oh, I don't mind, if you want to hear. I thought you'd go away and never speak to me again."

"Whether I do or not, you've got to tell! There's neither beginning nor end to this! What were you doing before you were the Copper Princess, and what are you going to do, now that you aren't she any longer?"

"My Uncle Fitz took care of me after my father and mother died—I can barely remember them! He had a Spanish woman at the ranch. Maybe she wasn't very good. I have heard since I grew up that she was supposed to have murdered a man, and—oh, done all sorts of things! But she was very kind to me, and very elegant, and talked ever so many languages. Then she died, and uncle had to put me in a convent. He hated that, and so did I, and I ran away several times and went back to him. Then he coaxed the nuns to let me be with him every Summer, and we used to have lovely times, when he had money; and, when he hadn't, we had a cabin in the woods, and that was the best of all."

"Convent, ranch, cabin—variety, anyhow!"

"Oh, he hoped to leave me rich. He owned a whole tract of copper land, but they say it is worthless. And there was a gold mine, but there was a flaw in the title—something missing. He tried—a lawyer tried for me after his death; but it was no use."

"And where does that uncle of mine come in?"

"Oh, that was after I grew up. He and Uncle Fitz used to go prospecting. But that's too long a story, and it's no matter. Well, a man shot poor uncle one day—Jack Ralston was dying of consumption by that time. I stayed because I could be of use—he was so good! It was his talk about the great world and the novels we read that started my ideas. So, when he died, I took the sixty thousand dollars. I went East, and I lived at a grand school for nearly a year, and tried to grow like other girls——"

"You didn't hate it any?"

"I feel choked when I remember all that awful drudgery and the rules, and—oh, it was dreadful! But I bore it.

I meant to have my year, and it has come to an end sooner than I expected. But I've lived such a lot in the time! Now I'll just disappear, and let the great folk wonder for a week over Jack Fitzmaurice."

"And Lady Desborough and the Fentons?"

"They're so good—so good! Only think, Janet said this morning when she knew I'd lost what was in the bank—oh, did you know about Stringers'?"

"Well, they've taken some hundreds of mine, too, but that's no matter! So all you had to finish your year on went up with them?"

"Yes. Janet thinks I've a fortune left, but she'd keep me if she knew the truth! And Mrs. Fenton saying she wished I wasn't rich—she would like me for a daughter! Oh, I don't feel guilty toward anybody else, now that I have given you the jewels—save those two and Janet! And there is another thing, though it is really none of your business! She was afraid of me at first. I had some old letters of hers—it's too long to tell. I should not, any way, but I told her about them——"

She stopped, not because she hesitated to confess what she had done, but from a fear of revealing the importance they had been to Lady Desborough.

Alderson's face grew somewhat stern as she paused, but he said, quickly:

"You gave them to her—I am sure you gave them to her."

"Yes—that night after you talked about the meanness of holding things over a person's head! But, indeed, I would have done it before, only I was so in it day and night I had no time to remember. And, oh, the Fentons—do you think I need tell them I am a fraud? They are so fond of me! Yes, I will—I'll go and do it this minute!"

She was on her feet again, but again he forced her to sit down.

"You will never make your fortune writing sensational stories," he said; "you are too sketchy, and you leave out the most exciting bits. I have something I want to show you."

He undid the top buttons of his waistcoat, and took a thin morocco case from an inside pocket. He opened it, and held a photograph before her startled eyes. It was the picture of a lovely girl in a boy's blouse, leggings and cap. She had a revolver in her right hand, and carried two others in her belt. Jack Fitzmaurice's fine acquaintance would have said it was like one of her freaks to wear the dress to a masquerade, and wondered she had not appeared in it at one of the season's costume balls. What a success it would have been!

"You knew me from the first?" she exclaimed.

"It was in the letter from my uncle—the one he never finished; so I did not know your name."

"I broke down when he died. He was buried days before I knew anything! The lawyer had sent you the papers—but he had lost your address, and couldn't remember it, nor your name, either."

"Well, yours came to me at last."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" she cried. "That girl you dreamed about! And now you know there never was any such girl. It was only Jack Fitzmaurice, the adventuress—for I suppose I am one, though I did pay my way! She is always found out, in stories——"

"And you evolved out—that's the difference!" he broke in. "What's that envelope? It must have dropped out of your bag."

"It's my steamer ticket," she said, as he handed it to her; "I am going to sail to-morrow evening."

"Are you? Well, I'll keep it for you, else you will lose it again before we get back to town."

"Now I must go and tell the Fentons," she said, trying to rise; but he kept his hand on her arm, saying, as he held up the photograph:

"They can wait! Anyhow, there is more to tell them—about that girl. You seem to have forgotten the best part. She saved the lives of two men. She took care of my uncle day and night for weeks. She was a providence

to every suffering person in the neighborhood, and found time to help everybody——"

"Oh, that's nothing! It's like giving money when one has it. There's no merit in it—it's just nature. Now, let's tell the Fentons, and be done."

"We aren't ready yet! See here—what are you going to do about me?"

She looked at him with uncomprehending eyes. "I do believe you mean to be friends still—I'm awfully glad!"

"Jack Fitzmaurice, don't you know I love you—love you——"

"But you can't!" she interrupted, regarding him in a puzzled way, though the color began to rush into her cheeks. "I never once thought of it, and I know you can't! Oh, is that your way of punishing me—to say if I had been different—like your dream-girl——?"

"You care, Jack—you do care!" He caught her in his arms; for an instant she resisted, then rested in his embrace. "Say it, Jack, say it!"

She put her lips close to his ear, and with a laugh that was a sob and a sob that was a laugh, she whispered:

"That is what has ailed me all these weeks, and I never dreamed it!"

XIII

LADY DESBOROUGH had returned home soon after two o'clock, completely prostrated by a sudden attack of one of the nervous headaches to which she was subject. There was nothing for it but to let Somers put her to bed and administer a soporific; she must lie quiet in the dark until sleep brought relief.

Seven o'clock struck before she woke, languid and weak; but strong tea soon dissipated those sensations.

"Ask Miss Fitzmaurice to come in," she said; "I can't go down to dinner, but she sha'n't be cheated out of the Townley ball."

Then Somers was forced to relate the whole doleful story which she had heard from a brother who was stew-

ard at one of the clubs. At first, Lady Desborough's anger at the absurd report concerning the elopement prevented her feeling much alarm at Jack's absence. But Somers, in her discreet fashion, had made sure the young lady was not with Mrs. Marston, and it was so late now that her disappearance was very disquieting. Scores of people had been at the house, the prince among them. Lady Desborough wrung her hands in helplessness and despair. There was no one whom she could consult, and she would not apply yet to the police; yet, if Jack did not return, that was all she could do, and the fear that some accident had happened drove her nearly frantic. She remembered the money loss, but that could have no connection with Jack's absence; she had been no more concerned than if she had dropped sixpence in the street!

Toward ten o'clock, Lady Desborough began to dress.

"I must go to that ball," she said; "I know she will come before I am ready—say she will, Somers—say so."

Somers tried to be energetic in her assertions, but it was difficult, and she was as troubled as her mistress, for the fascinating girl had long before won her obdurate heart.

At length, it occurred to Lady Desborough that she could trust Ralph Alderson, and she sent a note to his lodgings, begging him to come to her at once. It was a relief to have done something; then the duties of the toilette absorbed her until she put on her gown. But the sight of the beautiful frock roused her to fresh misery. It had been Jack's last present, and she had saved it for this ball. Somers scolded her roundly for endangering the delicately tinted satin by her tears, and that did them both good.

A servant came to say that Lord Scarsdale had called.

"Tell him I shall be down in ten minutes; ask him to wait!"

Suddenly Somers recollected that a letter had come for Miss Fitzmaurice with his lordship's monogram on the

envelope; there was also an American letter, marked "Important."

Scarsdale had gone to his club at dinner-time. It would be easier, he thought, to face curious acquaintances than to sit opposite his mother's disapproving face. At his club, he received the letter which Jack had written to him that morning. This made the overflowing drop in his cup of bitterness—his mother and the duchess had forced him to make a consummate ass of himself. He could not quite curse his parent, but he showered maledictions on the head of the other woman. Instead of eating his dinner he roamed about the streets, and then blamed himself for not having gone at once to Lady Desborough's. If Miss Fitzmaurice had not returned, he might at least secure his absurd letter. But now he felt sure she was back—that she and her friend were laughing at his idiocy in hoping they would believe he had written before her letter of refusal had reached him. He would go to the house, in any event. It was something to do for the moment.

He learned that Miss Fitzmaurice was not in, and when her ladyship's message was brought he went up into the drawing-room to wait. The lights hurt his aching eyes, and he passed on to the adjoining room, and walked to and fro among the shadows.

A carriage drove to the door, but he did not hear it. Presently, he heard some one enter the salon. He glanced out, and saw Isabel St. Aubyn. He had no mind to be forced into conversation, and stood waiting until her ladyship should appear. The duchess dropped her wrap and revealed her gorgeous gown, which displayed her beauty at its best, but Gerald wondered how he could ever have thought her handsome. What was she doing? She had taken a letter from her pocket, and now hurried to a table, and laid the missive under some books. Then she glanced about with an air of relief. Lady Desborough entered at that moment.

"So glad to see you, Isabel. They said Gerald was here."

"So he is," Lord Scarsdale said, moving forward. "You both look stunning!"

"One wouldn't suppose you thought it from the way you glower at us both," returned Lady Desborough, struggling to assume her ordinary manner, while dreading the inquiries of the two visitors.

The duchess stood appalled by the fear that Gerald might have seen her hide the letter. He did not know what he suspected, but, whatever trick her grace had attempted, he meant to thwart it. Something seemed to warn him that in some way it concerned the American. He went to the table, and pushed aside the books. The movement caused the letter to fall to the floor. The duchess stood helpless, incapable of a movement.

"What is that?" said Lady Desborough.

"Seems to be a letter for you," rejoined Scarsdale, glancing at the superscription, as he handed her the note.

"Oh, it is from Alderson!" she exclaimed. "I wrote to him a while ago. How odd they should have left his answer there!"

While she opened and read the page, Scarsdale stood looking full at the duchess. She could not turn her eyes away from his, though she knew he was reading her shame and misery.

"Why, Jack went with him and some American friends to Hampton Court. They were to dine at Richmond. Oh, this note was left in the morning—what does it mean?—I'll turn every servant out of the house! Ring, Gerald, quick!"

"The servants don't know anything about it," he answered, doggedly, the sudden angry fire in his eyes holding the duchess still mute and motionless. "Her grace took that letter out of her pocket, and hid it under the books—I saw her."

"Good God, Isabel!" cried Lady Desborough.

The wretched woman's lips moved, but she uttered no sound.

"I want to ask your ladyship

kindly to ask for a letter I sent to Miss Fitzmaurice," Scarsdale continued. "You know I considered myself engaged to her. Well, I was ass and cad enough to write her that I took my freedom. A while ago I had a note from her, written this morning, in which she refuses me again, decidedly enough. It isn't worth while for me to be made utterly contemptible in her eyes, so, if you will just get me the letter I wrote——"

"Here it is," her ladyship interrupted, giving him the epistle, and flinging the American letter on the table.

"I'll say good night now, Lady Desborough," added Scarsdale.

"Gerald!" cried the duchess. "I want to explain—it was an accident. I had taken the note up with my handkerchief, and found it out only a little while ago——"

She stopped. He was laughing. The bitterness and the scorn in his eyes made Lady Desborough absolutely pity the duchess—so heartily that her anger quickly died out.

"Let us forget it," she said.

"I dare say her grace will, and perhaps you can," he rejoined. "I don't happen to be built that way! It is good-bye for a year, at least, Lady Desborough. I am going to set out to-morrow morning for a trip around the world. It is very likely I'll take two years instead of one."

"Gerald!" the duchess repeated. It seemed to her that she was dying—nothing mattered now. "Gerald!"

But he was gone. Before either woman could find any words, there came the sound of carriage wheels stopping before the door, and the rat-tat of the ponderous knocker pealed through the house. There chanced to be a momentary stillness in the square; through the open windows floated the sweet ring of Jack Fitzmaurice's voice.

"Till to-morrow, then. Good night, dear Mrs. Fenton. Oh, I have had the time of my life to-day—that wicked husband of yours is squeezing my hand! Ralph, come in and let Lady

Desborough scold you for keeping me so late."

Lord Scarsdale had stepped into the reception-room below. He looked out of the window, heard the merry words; and saw the girl's radiant face in the white light of the electric lamps. He stood still as the two entered the hall. When the footman disappeared, he saw Alderson snatch Jack in his arms and hold her fast for a moment. Then the pair went on up-stairs, and he passed out into the night and his solitude.

"Oh, Janet—Janet!" cried Jack, dancing into the drawing-room. "Oh, duchess, what a perfect gown! Scold him well, Janet—Ralph, I mean—he's Ralph now! You said you should pity the man who undertook me, so you can condole with him."

Lady Desborough extended both hands, and Alderson grasped them in his unfashionably hearty way.

"I congratulate you with all my heart!" she cried. "And she has given up two titles for you. Oh, what a handful you will find her!"

"I do feel rather as if I had caught a will-o'-the-wisp," he answered, with a happy laugh.

"And, oh, Jack, there is a thick American letter for you—marked 'important.' Maybe they have elected you queen of the States."

She moved on toward the duchess. Jack opened her letter and read it; then she called, in a bewildered tone:

"Ralph, come tell me what it means!"

She put one hand on his shoulder, and he held the other fast to steady the letter she was holding up. The duchess watched the pair through a mist, wondering how it was possible for two human beings to look so happy. Like the emotional creature she was, Lady Desborough's heart was touched by the speechless misery of that white face.

"Isabel," she said, "let's stop being ill-natured to each other! I am aw-

fully sorry for you—don't be vexed at my saying so! I lived through something once that was different—but worse—when I was a girl. Yet here I am, tolerably comfortable and contented! One lives past it, whatever it is—lives past everything."

"Yes," said the duchess; "but life is a little hard when everything is gone—everything!"

And Jack was saying:

"Is it true, Ralph? Can it be true?"

But it was! The copper mines had developed new veins of immense value—the missing link in the gold-mine title had been found.

"You could realize thirty millions to-day," Ralph said; "but later—no girl has any business to be so rich!"

"It's the drollest world!" cried Jack, running forward. "It's the dearest world, and I am always the luckiest girl in it! Six millions, Janet—pounds, you know."

"Heavens!" her ladyship cried. "All that added to the rest! I am glad—gladder—gladdest! Jack, if you have any more money left you, I shall turn you out of the house! Go up-stairs and put on your war paint—it will be midnight before we get to the Townleys! And do you go home, Ralph Alderson, and dress and come back for us as fast as you can! I vow, you impossible Americans will drive me as mad as you are yourselves before I have done with you!"

She was playfully pushing Jack out of the room. The girl stopped, threw both arms about her neck, and whispered:

"The first thing is to pay off the mortgage on this house, and settle every blessed debt you owe! And there are half-a-dozen people I mean to make happy, if money can do it, and—" Then aloud: "Ralph, Ralph, you dreadful boy, don't stand staring at me as if you were moon-struck! Come here this instant minute, and kiss my Janet Desborough!"



THE LAMP AT THE WINDOW

By Madison Cawein

LIKE some gaunt ghost the tempest wails
Outside my door; its icy nails
Beat on my pane. And night and storm
Around the house, with furious flails
Of wind, from which the slant sleet hails,
Stalk up and down; or, arm in arm,
Stand giant guard; the wild-beast lair
Of their fierce bosoms black and bare. . . .
My lamp is lit; I have no fear—
Through night and storm my love draws near.

Now through the forest how they go,
With whirlwind hoofs and maned with snow,
The beasts of tempest! Winter herds,
That lift huge heads of mist, and low
Like oxen; beasts of air, that blow
Ice from their nostrils; winged like birds,
And bullock-breasted, onward hurled,
That shake with tumult all the world. . . .
My lamp is set where Love can see,
Who through the tempest comes to me.

I press my face against the pane,
And seem to see, from wood and plain,
In phantom thousands, stormy pale,
The ghosts of forests, tempest-slain,
Vast wraiths of trees, rise up and strain
And rock wild limbs against the gale;
Or, borne in fragments overhead,
Sow night with horror and with dread. . . .
He comes! my light is as an arm
To guide him onward through the storm.

I hear the tempest from the sky .
Cry, eagle-like, its battle-cry;
I hear the night, upon the peaks,
Send back its condor-like reply;
And then again comes booming by
The forest's challenge, hoarse as speaks
Hate unto hate, or wrath to wrath,
When each draws sword and sweeps the path. . . .
But let them rage! through darkness far
My bright light leads him like a star.

THE SMART SET

The cliffs, with all their plumes of pines,
 Bow down high heads; the battle-lines
 Of all the hills, the iron seams,
 Shudder through all their rocky spines;
 And, 'neath their shields of matted vines,
 The vales crouch down, and all the streams
 Are hushed and frozen, as with fear,
 As from the deeps the winds draw near. . . .
 But let them come! my lamp is lit!
 Nor shall their fury flutter it.

Now, round and round, with stride on stride,
 In icy armor, darkness-dyed,
 I hear the thunder of their strokes.
 The heavens are rocked on every side
 With all their clouds; and, far and wide,
 The earth roars back with all its oaks.
 Still at the pane burns bright my light
 To guide him onward through the night,
 To lead him through the night and storm
 Where my glad heart shall make him warm.



AT THE THANKSGIVING DINNER

MRS. NEEBUD—You should not blame me, John; I followed the directions
 of the recipe-book. I left the turkey in the oven four hours.

JOHN (*trying to be tender*)—But was the oven hot, dearest?

MRS. NEEBUD—Oh, you are so cruel, John! How can you expect me to
 think of everything?



VISIBLE REASONS

“WONDER why she lifts her skirts so high while passing over the crossing?”
 “Oh, it’s no wonder! I can see two good reasons.”



“HAVE you heard the latest? Brown’s wife has run off with his chauffeur.”
 “Mercy, what a pity! He was such a good chauffeur! Brown will
 never be able to replace him.”

THE HONEST OGLIVIE

By Maurice Francis Egan

“I CAN see,” Constance Warwick said, “that a girl in my position must make her own way.” She had left Philadelphia at the age of fourteen, to begin her education in a French convent. She had returned at seventeen, to be with her father for a year. At twenty-two, she was home again. She had an unimpeachable manner—her convent had been the most aristocratic in Paris. She knew marquises and countesses by the score; she was beautiful and graceful. Her complexion was exquisitely toned, after the manner of young peach-blossoms, and her eyes were of the softest brown, with sometimes a distant hint of gold in them. As for her clothes, nobody could find fault with them. Madame Jonquille, a sort of dependent of the nuns, who never wore good clothes herself, but whose taste in other persons’ clothes was remarkable, approved of them. Constance’s character had been carefully formed, but all the force of her education had not changed her way of looking at life, which was not European at all. In spite of her advantages, she had, in her native city, made no friends. She was “out” of everything that seemed desirable to her. Madame Jonquille hoped that this isolation might drive her back to Paris. Constance had no illusions. “I can see,” she said, putting down René Bazin’s “De Toute Son Âme,” which she was not allowed to read at the convent, “that I must make up my mind as to what position I shall take, if I am to remain in the world.”

Warwick was very rich; he had made money in the retail grocery-shop down

in South street in other days, and added to it by buying large tracts of land to the west of the old City Hall, before the new one was thought of, or the obese statue of William Penn had begun to warn the outlying districts that Philadelphians would allow themselves to be “looted,” if they wanted to, and that the world must mind its own business. An uncle of Warwick’s—quite an old man—had married an Italian woman, and “John Warwick, Groceries, Domestic and Foreign Wines and Liquors,” still showed dimly over the dingy place. In other days, too, Warwick, the unforeseeing, had sold the shop to his uncle, and his uncle, in spite of all temptation, clung to it.

This was bad—for it accentuated Warwick’s social past—but he did not know how bad it was until Constance came home, and Prince Stanislaus Sveski de Brohan was introduced to the Warwicks by Oglivie. The introduction was not a good thing for Oglivie, because Prince Stanislaus presented Penn-Gaskell Warren.

Warwick, who was tall, florid, and wore small side-whiskers of a golden color, untinged by gray, though his head was almost bald, had the habit of boasting before Constance came home that he was a self-made man. After that he toned down, for Constance, after she came from the convent in Paris, could or would not look like the daughter of a self-made man. Oglivie, who was Warwick’s lawyer, was the only young man who came to the house. There were, to be sure, some of Warwick’s old cronies, who were also self-made men, and who very often showed rough places, that perhaps

more expert makers might have planed smooth.

Oglivie was nearly thirty. He had gone through the usual college course somewhere in the West; his father and mother had died; he had come to Philadelphia to practise law, in the belief that money was to be made where money was. Rather reticent, somewhat shy, with a practical view of life, from the Western point of view, Oglivie had begun to do very well. He was tall, clean-cut and muscular, and paid very little attention to the artificialities of life until his attention was called to them; nevertheless, he had good manners, though they were not always the manners of the conventional gentleman. He had no family influence, although his father had been a Philadelphian, who had married a very charming Irish woman "not exactly," as the old Philadelphian said, "of his class," but entirely respectable. In her own country, Oglivie's mother was a person who had made a downward plunge by her marriage, because Oglivie's father, in the English and Irish sense, was not a gentleman. But all this did not concern Oglivie until the arrival of Prince Stanislaus, who came over, addressed like an express package to him. Prince Stanislaus's mother had been Irish, too, and he was, in some distant way, related to Oglivie.

Prince Stanislaus was about Oglivie's age, dark, slender, amiable, but very practical—the fourth son of that old Sveski de Brohan who had shocked all Europe by writing a long paper to show that all the evils in the Balkan Peninsula were due to the partition of Poland. Prince Stanislaus had been in London, and he spoke English very well. It was necessary that he should be put up at the two exclusive clubs. Oglivie, living in a small Western town, had never considered a club a necessity of life. He therefore put the prince in the hands of his only acquaintance in society, Penn-Gaskell Warren, engaged rooms for him at the Bellevue, and, with some trepidation, gave him a dinner at the same place, to which he invited War-

wick, his daughter and Madame Jonquille, who lived at the Warwicks' great house in North Broad street, in order to be of use to Constance. Penn Warren was to be of the party, of course—Warren had been by accident Oglivie's yoke-fellow in a certain case against the city, which they had won.

Constance Warwick was certainly a most beautiful girl; her peach-blossom coloring and the brown of her eyes, with the real golden tint of her hair, gave her an unusual charm. She had inherited from her mother an exquisite voice, which the nuns had taught her to modulate carefully. She was slender and very graceful; but it was the voice that made Prince Stanislaus look up as if shocked by electricity when she smilingly sat down at the table on the Broad-street side of the Bellevue café, and acknowledged Oglivie's introduction. Seeing the effect on his guest, Oglivie suddenly felt a cold chill, which, as he was not analytical, he did not attempt to account for.

So far, Warwick had been quite happy in his North Broad street palace. He would have liked Constance "to show off more." She occasionally played some of her "musical fireworks" for his cronies, and he sometimes said, in a casual way, "Con, I am sure Madame Jonquille would like to speak French with you." Then, with unmeasured delight, he heard the speech of Paris trip lightly from his daughter's lips, and tried not to show his pride in her.

He did not know his neighbors; he had spent much of his time in Paris without learning to speak its tongue, while Constance was at school there; and, as to Constance's marrying anybody, *that* was out of the question. Why, she had just come home. Oglivie was a "good sort of fellow," "straight," and "the kind of boy a man can trust about the house." Constance liked him to play the violin to her piano, while Warwick beamed on them both.

The dinner went off very well. Madame Jonquille, sixty, Roman-nosed and alert, forgot her modest toque;

made by her own hands, and spoke French with grace and airiness.

"Ah, monsieur," she said to the prince, "the theatre will never be what it was when Bernhardt and Croisette were young. And Aimée——"

"I am afraid she was wicked," said the prince, with a twinkle in his eye.

"I never saw the wickedness," said Madame Jonquille; "it is only men that see wickedness where women see genius."

Madame, who had had her second glass of champagne, hummed, with more ear than voice, "*Voici le sabre.*"

"This is *life*," whispered Warwick, with a wink at Oglivie. "I did not think the old girl had it in her."

Penn Warren looked uneasily at the Wharton-Browns, who were dining at the opposite table. Madame Jonquille was bad enough, but Warwick's manner was worse. He felt for a moment as if he would like to tell the Wharton-Browns that the guest of honor was Sveski de Brohan, whose father had broken up cabinets—then he blushed for himself.

Constance, sparkling and glowing, was telling Prince Stanislaus of the first performance of "*Cyrano de Bergerac.*" Oglivie, who did not know French, began to feel a chill; he was left out. It had not occurred to him before that he would have minded being "left out."

The dining-room was well filled, and the group of handsome young persons attracted attention. Everybody knew Penn Warren. Only one man, Gillespie, of the *Eagle*, knew Warwick. He was dining with Senator Steelflower.

"Beautiful girl," the senator said.

"Old Warwick's daughter."

"Most beautiful girl in the city. As I was saying, if four-per-cent. bonds——"

Oglivie's guests had come to the coffee, when Mr. Wharton-Brown beckoned to Penn Warren.

"Glad to see you. We're just back from London. Too many Americans. A week or two at house-parties in Lancashire. Who's your party?"

"Oh, Mr. Warwick and his daughter," said Penn Warren.

"Never met them. Where?"

"North Broad street."

"Oh," said Mr. Wharton-Brown, stiffly. "And the men?"

"Prince Stanislaus Sveski de Brohan and——"

"Good name," said Mr. Wharton-Brown, with interest. "Sveski de Brohans are connected with everybody in France and Austria. Real thing—this prince?"

"You can look in the '*Almanach de Gotha*,' and ask Mr. Oglivie," said Penn Warren, coldly.

"Take your word for it. Don't know Oglivie."

"Do bring the prince over and present him to us," broke in Mrs. Wharton-Brown, with a dazzling smile.

"And the other men?" asked Penn Warren.

"Warwick's the grocer from North Broad street," said Mr. Wharton-Brown. "Evoluted from a little place in South street to a big place in Market street, and then bought up half West Philadelphia. The other man is Patrick Oglivie—nobody in particular, but a good fellow."

"Oh, one can't be rude," said Mrs. Wharton-Brown. "If you present one, you will have to present the others; but that's the grocer's daughter! She looks to the manner born. It's strange how that sort of girl adapts herself to new conditions. How do you think Clarissa is looking?"

Clarissa Wharton-Brown, a tall, blonde girl, with a dissatisfied expression, laughed.

"What does Penn Warren care, mama? Just trot the prince out."

Warren went over to his table. Prince Stanislaus was mixing a pousse-café after his own recipe. He assented languidly, but Oglivie said, "Wait till we're going out. We can't take the ladies to their table, and I suppose Mr. Warren wouldn't like to disarrange them by bringing them over here."

Penn Warren stared. He had not thought of the ladies.

Prince Stanislaus watched his face with eyes that, in this new country, made observations for themselves. He glanced at the stately Mrs. Wharton-Brown, whose "wealth" of yellow hair was profusely displayed after the Pompadour manner. She was resplendent in pink brocade. Her daughter was quieter, but she wore all sorts of chiffons.

"I am puzzled," he whispered to Oglivie; "is it that madame of the blonde hair is not of the same rank as Miss Warwick—or is madame of the blonde hair——?"

Penn-Gaskell heard, and he blushed. Oglivie did not in the least understand; he was from the West. At Clayton, Idaho, everybody would have been sociable, and, quiet as he was at ordinary times, his Irish blood would have led him, on occasions of this sort, to be very genial.

The prince was good-natured.

"Oh, let us go, then, and meet your friends. Ah, Madame Jonquille, you will find my pousse-café as good as any at the Hôtel Ritz."

"It was the Café Anglais, in my time," said Madame Jonquille, "when dear Monsieur Jonquille lived. I do not know the new places."

Penn Warren's face was still flushed. The flush grew deeper, as he noticed Madame Jonquille's cheap clothes; her liberal salary went every month over-sea for *rentes*. Warwick's hearty and untrammelled manner was bad enough, but that Prince Stanislaus should take the august Mrs. Wharton-Brown, whose mother had been a Cadwalader Apphys, and whose husband was of the Glendower Ap Joneses, for a person of dubious reputation was more than intolerable.

Constance's lips parted in an amused smile. Although her father *would* wear a simple black jacket in the evening, even when he dined abroad in the presence of ladies, and some of Madame Jonquille's ornaments were not convincing to good taste, she felt quite sure of herself; and, indeed, her admirable black gown, with touches of jet, and a bunch of heliotrope, and

her Rubens hat, with its forest of lilac-colored plumes, were distinguished by contrast with the chiffon boas and glittering *appliqué* of the Wharton-Browns. Oglivie did not in the least understand the cause of Penn Warren's embarrassment. This, and her father's frank delight in meeting the Wharton-Browns, forced her to check a little laugh. "Important people," said Warwick, in a low tone; "ask them to dinner at once, Con!"

"I will not meet them to-night, father. You just be polite—and wait."

The introduction over, Warwick and Oglivie returned to the table, Oglivie scowling a little, Warwick openly delighted. Penn Warren and Prince Stanislaus had been astutely detained by Mrs. Wharton-Brown, with a view of engaging them for dinner on Sunday night.

Prince Stanislaus, whose curiosity was excited, accepted the invitation promptly. They seemed to be new American types.

"The Wharton-Browns are tip-top—big bugs," said Warwick, still smiling. "I don't know why you will not be introduced. I wonder if I ought to send them a bottle of wine with my compliments——"

"For heaven's sake——" Penn Warren began.

"I object," said Prince Stanislaus; "we shall have the wine here. Would not that be well?"

"Another time, then," said Warwick, a little clouded by the frustration of his hospitable intention. "Your health!" he called to Mrs. Wharton-Brown, as he raised his glass. "May we meet again," he added, solemnly.

Penn Warren turned away his face in agony. Mrs. Wharton-Brown raised her lorgnette, and Wharton-Brown himself smiled with forced amiability. Prince Stanislaus raised his glass, and clinked with Warwick.

"So," he said, with that exasperating look of intelligence that foreigners assume at times, "so, you drink the health of the ladies in public? Ah, it is *gemüthlich*. But it is not strange that

your lower classes drink beer at dessert, and eat what you call pie with what you call ice-cream for breakfast!"

"It is strange," said Oglivie, gravely.

"I observe," said Prince Stanislaus. "I have a good head," he added, with complacency. "I shall soon know much of the American manners."

Penn Warren was furious. The prince's self-satisfied ignorance was bad enough, but Oglivie's indifference was worse. How could he disabuse the Austrian of the opinion that the inefable Wharton-Browns were not of the very inner circle of society?

Oglivie was thinking of Constance; he had no need to look at her face, for it had haunted him for many days and nights, but to-night it seemed oddly far away from him. He knew very little of the complicated social conditions of any city. In his own little town, honesty and kindness and energy had counted very much. In Chicago, as he had seen it, money had been the main consideration. Brains, of course, had been considered, but only as they could be counted into money. Here in Philadelphia he had thought little about social matters, in the lesser sense. He had worked, and with success. Warwick's splendor was much like the Chicago splendor, and Warwick's unbounded hospitality was what he was accustomed to among the prosperous men he had known in the West. If a young man could show a girl's father that he had a career before him, even the richest father would put no barrier between two hearts. It made no difference whether the man's father and mother had lived in a log-cabin or not. If a man's past was fairly good, and he had a future, Croesus in the West blessed the happy pair, and they floated off in their own little boat. Oglivie's past was good. Boy and man he had been busy, and, more than that, he had had an unusually sane and sensible father; therefore, he had escaped several snares. Slowly he had realized that he was in love with Constance Warwick, and he had

determined to tell her so. He fancied that Madame Jonquille knew this and approved. But to-night, as the party left the Bellevue, madame, volubly talking, detained him while Prince Stanislaus escorted Constance to the carriage.

To Penn Warren's intense relief, the Wharton-Browns had left before the Warwicks passed out. The three waited until Warwick had made very cordial adieus, by thrusting a handful of cigars out of the carriage window. They stood on the sidewalk for a moment, with the unacknowledged feeling that something had happened. Oglivie sighed, and, noticing it with a repressed feeling of hostility, Penn Warren made amends by at once inviting the other two into the Art Club; and there, to a pleasant table, various drinks of the country were brought.

"Ah," said Prince Stanislaus, who was very busy with a mint-julep, "that was a most agreeable dinner. Mr. Warwick is very good, and mademoiselle most beautiful, and the little Madame Jonquille of a pretty wit."

"Where on earth did the Warwicks pick up that Madame Jonquille?" asked Penn Warren, irritably.

"In Paris," said Oglivie, nettled by Warren's patronizing tone. "She was a dependent of the Countess de Nevers, who took a great interest in Constance—in Miss Warwick. She is very clever."

"She is in singularly bad taste."

"I don't know about that," retorted Oglivie.

Penn Warren smiled, and the smile for the moment made Oglivie furious. It seemed to say, "How could *you* know?" For Oglivie, the atmosphere had changed. There seemed to be a thousand points of irritation all around him.

"Frankly, Warren," he said, "I can't see that Madame Jonquille is in any worse taste than your Wharton-Browns. She, at least, was not ill-mannered."

Penn Warren flushed.

"The Wharton-Browns are my friends."

"And Madame Jonquille is one of mine."

"Isn't she a governess—or something?" Penn Warren asked, with a slight sneer.

"She is my friend, nevertheless."

"There is no disputing about friends or tastes," said Prince Stanislaus, good-naturedly, but not understanding. "If the blond-haired old lady, with the haughty daughter, is not of the best society, no harm is done, as Mademoiselle Warwick was not presented to her. Men may meet anybody. This American drink is bizarre. It is *crème de menthe*, with fire in it."

"But, prince," said Penn Warren, earnestly, "the Wharton-Browns are of the best circle. Our friends, the Warwicks, are delightful people, but they are not in society here—they are really not exactly—"

"Warren!" exclaimed Oglivie, "drop that kind of talk. The Warwicks are fit for any society. I hate to hear a man of your calibre talk like an old cat at a sewing-circle."

"Thank you, Oglivie. I am simply stating facts. Prince Stanislaus had better know how things are here, in the most conservative of American cities. If *you* don't want to know, or can't learn, hold your tongue. Miss Warwick, perfectly good form as she is, can enter the circle only by marriage."

"She is very rich, is she not?" asked Prince Stanislaus.

"She will be," said Penn Warren, shortly, "very rich."

"I admire her. She is simple and grand at the same time. I like to hear her speak; she has the wit that does not sting; she does not laugh only with her teeth. I shall think of her all the time," Prince Stanislaus said, with conviction.

Oglivie and Penn Warren glared at him.

"I love the American girls, but the very rich are too *capricieuse*, and one of the poor I could not marry, though

some of the poor are ravishingly beautiful and good. My family would not receive her—for she could not give entertainments, and keep up the honor of the name."

"You do not seem to consider that family counts among us, too," said Penn Warren, piqued. "Some of our girls that are poor are of good families."

"But even peasant girls may be of good families in that sense—though they are sometimes bad themselves." And Prince Stanislaus sighed reminiscently and dolefully. "If an American girl is beautiful and amiable and rich—and if she is of the right religion, it is better—we will receive her at home. Her family does not concern us at all. There are no families in America, except the Bonapartes, into which the imperial family married. In England, it is different. There, one cannot marry a girl without family. I am surprised that you have families in America; I did not know it."

Oglivie laughed.

"You come West, prince," he said; "it will suit you out there."

Penn Warren was speechless. What could he say in the presence of so much barbaric company? Prince Stanislaus yawned, and went off to his hotel.

"Warwick seemed delighted to meet the Wharton-Browns," Warren lighted another cigar. "I believe *he* understands better than you what an acquaintanceship with them means."

"I don't in the least understand. In fact, Warren, all that sort of thing seems to me very petty. Warwick is a fine character, noble, kind—a little stuck on himself—but he has reason to think that way. He has made himself!"

"I wish he hadn't. I wish some one else had made him, and made him differently. I'm in love with Constance Warwick," he continued, abjectly. "I know it is awfully fresh for me to say this, but I have got to tell somebody."

"And she?" asked Oglivie, drily.

"I think she likes me; and I can give her what she most wants—social position."

"Oh, *that's* what she most wants?"

"Certainly," said Warren, throwing away his cigar, which had gone out, and taking a cigarette. "She is horribly handicapped. In fact, the condition of a girl like her, beautiful, rich, well-bred, but without family connections, is hopelessly middle-class in Philadelphia. Warwick is rich, of course, but terribly—out of drawing." Warren substituted this phrase in answer to a look in Oglivie's eyes.

"I think she had better cut out 'social position,' as you call it. She is beautiful and cultivated, and she can do without it."

Warren stared, hopelessly. "On my word, Oglivie," he said, "you amaze me. Don't you see that the Warwicks are nobody here?"

"I don't see anything of the kind, and I don't see why they should care. They can have everything they want."

Penn Warren laughed, as one dealing with a barbarian, and rang the bell for the carbonic water. "Prince Stanislaus's view is absurd and cold-blooded," he said.

"And yours is not less cold-blooded!" retorted Oglivie.

"But not absurd. All Americans are alike, Prince Stanislaus thinks; he also believes there are no classes in America! I wish that he had lived in Philadelphia for a while. He'd change his mind!"

"He'd probably set up to be a class by himself," said Oglivie. "I think he is cold-blooded, but I don't think he is so absurd as you are. I want to tell you straight that with your ideas you wouldn't marry Miss Warwick, even if she'd have you."

"I would, if it weren't for her father; he is impossible. Think of marrying a girl whose father you couldn't put up at your club!"

"Oh—!" Oglivie was inclined to swear; he checked himself.

"I could 'place' her," Warren said. "I shall risk it in spite of her father. I can give her everything she wants."

Oglivie bit his lip.

"Prince Stanislaus can give her more than you can."

"It's a fair fight!"

Oglivie was speechless with anger. It was a fair fight, and the opponents seemed to think that he was left out of it! He took his hat, and said good-bye to Warren. He did not care to think; his immense energy seemed paralyzed. A fair fight! And through the artificiality of society and the conventionality of the girl he loved, he was out of it. Oh, for a wild rush somewhere, anywhere! Oh, for the days when a man could work his own way by his own might to love and happiness; the days of the log-cabin, and the free life of unspoiled nature!

A voice from a group coming from the University Club struck his ear. It was a clear young tenor—

*"Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten
Dass ich so traurig bin."*

The song chimed, or rather knelled, with his mood. Oglivie looked at life from a commonplace point of view, but at the core of his heart was the old romance, and yet he feared sentiment almost as much as sentimentalism; but, once in his room, he looked himself square in the face. Constance Warwick was the only woman of whom he had thought seriously. Her voice was a constant delight to him; her looks, grave or gay, an inexplicable revelation of a new life. He loved her, he knew, and yet at this moment he distrusted her. She was in an artificial world, and she would accept the conditions of this world. Why not? All women were ambitious in that way. His mother, he knew, had not been—but, then, she was his mother and therefore set apart from all other women.

Prince Stanislaus was a marble-hearted, arrogant swell; Penn Warren was worse, an imitation swell, considering silly conventionalities when the greatest question of life was to be answered. She would choose between these two, of course. *He* was out of the race. In this new world of false standards, he could offer her nothing sufficiently false. He ordered a cup of black coffee, and spent the rest of the night in revising a brief.

A week passed. Oglivie did not go to the Warwicks'; but Prince Stanislaus and Penn Warren dropped in at five o'clock every day when they did not send flowers. At the end of the week, Oglivie saw Warwick at his office on business. There was a question of a fee in a case which Oglivie had won. Warwick signed the cheque in great good-humor; it was for a large amount, too.

"I am greatly obliged to you," beaming. "Constance is delighted with your prince. Did you see those paragraphs in the papers about the dinner in the Bellevue? Half-a-dozen swells have called—the right sort, too. I have asked his nibs to be my guest, and I've had it put in the papers. I don't mind telling you I was a bit anxious about Constance; I shouldn't like to see her playing second fiddle in her own city, when I've got money enough, and she has got beauty enough, to play first. The prince sent her flowers this morning, and so did Penn Warren. A race, hey? A race, hey?" Warwick added, chuckling. "If Constance marries a European, I hope he will have a title—you are nobody over there without it. It is the same in Philadelphia; if you are not taken up by the old set, you are out. I've been out, but I don't mind it; it's different with Constance."

Oglivie did not answer. Warwick laughed, and clapped him on the shoulder.

"Your heart's in the law! These fashionable monkey tricks don't interest you!"

Oglivie smiled gravely, and accepted an invitation to dine for Monday; but there was wrath in his heart—Warwick was a fool. What could you expect of a creature who had spent his life behind the counter? Naturally, a man would be pleased if one of his best customers noticed him socially. Warwick was certainly a snob! Oglivie ground his teeth, and clenched his fists. He compared Warwick to SMIKE or Spice, or some other idiot in "The Lady Slavey," which he had seen in Chicago. Warwick was just

the man to fill his house with portraits of his old customers, in lieu of ancestors. At this, he pulled himself up with a laugh that had some contempt in it. "What a snob you are yourself, Oglivie!"

He tried to think the whole matter over calmly, and he was compelled to admit that as conditions were, in this effete East, Constance would be making a sacrifice if she refused either Stanislaus or Penn Warren. What was he, a lawyer with no social position and five thousand a year, to a man who could make her a princess, or to one who would give her the entrée to those sacred places which it was her right, and no doubt her desire, to enter? He was a fool, he told himself, not to have known this—a fool just ejected from a paradise in which love and simplicity and idealism were— Oh, rot! he said; the world was a hard proposition, and that settled it. He had to clench his teeth and face the battalion.

An announcement in one of the newspapers had brought Warwick a piece of great good luck.

"In the fresh avenues of the Place Borghese, in the afternoon, one meets the very elect of Roman society. The other afternoon," wrote the correspondent, "I met the blonde Princess d'Antuni, Donna Clarice Frascara, whose beauty is as delicate and interesting as ever; the Countess Fani, exquisite in a great Rubens hat, and the Princess Sveska de Brohan, mother of the very wealthy Prince Stanislaus, now in America, but not in search of an heiress."

Mrs. Wharton-Brown said at once to her husband, "You must call."

"I can't," he said. "Look at this: 'Prince Stanislaus Sveski de Brohan is the guest of Mr. Sylvius Warwick on North Broad street.'"

"Why can't you?"

"I can't insult even those Warwicks by going without you."

Mrs. Wharton-Brown hesitated.

"The situation is horrible. A prince, and rich, we ought to think of Clarissa. I don't suppose John has ever driven up that dreadful street be-

fore. You'll have to give him explicit instructions," she said.

The Wharton-Browns called. Warwick was at home. He came into the drawing-room pulling on his coat. "I've been smoking," he said, "and I'm very glad to see you," with effusive cordiality. "I'm going to give a dinner to the prince to-night. Of course, you'll come."

"Monster!" Mrs. Wharton-Brown said, as she got into the carriage. "It broke my heart to accept, but *noblesse oblige*. Any mother will understand."

"Virginius isn't in it with you," her husband said, with a shamefaced grin. "Clarissa must have her chance—and, of course, you can cut the Warwicks later."

"Never! never!" said Mrs. Wharton-Brown. "I'll send them cards every year for my orphans' lawn fête. I'm never rude!"

Gillespie, of the *Eagle*; Senator Steelflower, who had managed to meet Warwick; Penn Warren, Oglivie, the Wharton-Browns and Madame Jonquille made up the dinner-party. Constance was in soft black, with a marvelous pink-pearl necklace, and a great La France rose in her corsage.

"Mine!" said Prince Stanislaus to Oglivie.

"See my flowers!" whispered Penn Warren, later.

Oglivie smiled, sardonically. They had both sent La France roses, then! He would have sent heliotrope, which she loved; but what was the use?

He took Madame Jonquille in to dinner. Madame was in Nile-green, arranged after the mode of '74, with very red coral ornaments. To Oglivie, the house had taken on a different air. Class distinction *did* exist outside of fashionable novels; society was a real thing; and Constance was "out of his star." "To hell," he said, savagely relaxing into his native dialect, "with foreign education and foreign ways!"

Madame Jonquille was radiant.

"Constance will be a princess yet," she whispered to Oglivie. "Think of it! I have prayed for this—she has

been so good to me. How attentive the prince is!"

"And how about Warren?" His voice, to his own ear, had a crack in it.

Madame Jonquille giggled, scornfully.

"What has he to offer the most beautiful girl of two continents?"

"He is in society," said Oglivie, repeating his new lesson.

Madame Jonquille laughed, and hummed "*Di provenza*." "You know what I mean?"

"I don't." He would have liked to add stronger language, but he only said, "I hate all Dago music."

Madame Jonquille laughed again.

"Oh, there is no society here. Constance would be at home only in a place of distinction. I'm glad that you are giving her up."

Oglivie was wrathful and startled.

"Who said I was?"

"Oh, yes," madame said, slowly; "you must. You are too much of a gentleman at heart to spoil her chances. You Americans can always find somebody else to fall in love with—she can't afford the luxury of love—she's so distinguished! She would die outside of a noble entourage. She must be a princess. Come—*trinquons!*"

Oglivie felt as if he were white to the lips. No man would have dared to speak so brutally to him, and yet Constance seemed happy. She had turned to Penn Warren, and Clarissa Wharton-Brown was telling Austrian court news gleaned from the latest *Figaro* to Prince Stanislaus.

After dinner, Madame Jonquille drew Oglivie into the conservatory, which was almost as splendid as if Warwick owned acres instead of feet.

"You're not to interfere!"

"What do you mean, madame?"

"You are not to spoil my dear child's opportunity."

"How can I spoil it? She wouldn't let me if I wanted to. Madame, I don't care to be impolite, but you'd better drop the subject."

"You are suffering," she said, "but it will pass. *Tout passe*, as Madame Bernhardt has often said. You don't

understand what it means for her to be a princess. She is beautiful and spirituelle and distinguished! Think what her life would be in this terrible city of burghers—a people like the provincial women of the blond coiffure! These persons would make her unhappy—but in Vienna she will go far. She is of the right religion, too, and so rich! She may like you, but she will forget—”

“Like me! It doesn’t look as if she were much struck on me—the way she is going on with Prince Stanislaus!”

“Ah!” said madame, sentimentally, “she has the heart!”

“And the head!” said Oglivie, cynically.

“A woman must have the head to succeed,” answered madame, with a sigh. “I was all heart when I was young.”

Oglivie said nothing. He was very gentle with old women; but all women in this artificial world irritated him.

“For her sake, you will not tell her that you like her, Mr. Oglivie?”

“Madame,” he answered, abruptly pulling a purple orchid from the vase at his elbow; “madame,” and he stopped. “Madame,” he checked himself in the act of tearing the flower savagely to pieces, “you seem to think that love”—he hesitated over the word, as if he were unveiling something sacred—“can be bought and sold. I do not love Constance Warwick in a way that you can understand—you with your rotten civilization—your mercenary view of life—”

“Mercenary!” said Madame Jonquille, in horror; “and this from an American!”

“Yes—from an American. We are not mercenary, as you are; we are still pure of heart—but I have guessed what you mean. It has all come to me in a moment. You know—she has told you that she likes me a little, but that since the prince has come she wants to forget me.”

“*Oui, oui, mon cher ami,*” she said, making mental reservations, “you will

not take advantage of my sentiment to tell her!”

“I will go as soon as I can.”

It had never occurred to him that a woman could lie—except in matters of business.

“I have told you *pour vous consoler*. I am all heart.”

After all, he thought, Constance would be well out of a marriage with Penn Warren, who was ashamed of her father, and who might, after a while, end by apologizing for her. If she wanted social position, the prince could give her the real thing.

The click of the billiard balls and Warwick’s voice sounded. Clarissa was singing a Slav folk-song, with an eye to the effect on Prince Stanislaus.

Constance was standing near a long window. Prince Stanislaus lounged into the conservatory, and Madame Jonquille, quite happy, escaped.

“Your fair compatriot will marry an American,” he said. “She is charming, but foolish, I think. She has broken my hopes. When I get home, they will make a marriage for me. She will marry—that bounder!”

“Warren?”

“Yes. He’s talking to her now.”

“It’s a rotten world,” said Oglivie. “Why were you in such a hurry?”

“Perhaps it was a mistake—but she is *tout à fait charmante*. Let us go.”

Penn Warren had left Constance, to go back to the piano. She stood alone.

“Good night,” Oglivie said. He looked into her eyes—the most beautiful things under heaven! He felt like saying, “God bless you!” How gentle, how stately!

“You are going so soon?”

“So soon,” he said. “I must work to-morrow.”

“You didn’t send me any flowers.” She looked at him as if she could see into his heart.

“No,” he stammered, “I would have sent you heliotropes—”

“And I would have worn them.”

She could see in the great mirror

opposite that Penn Warren was approaching.

"Mr. Oglivie," she said, looking at him frankly, "I understand you—I'm an American girl, after all. You don't know how to *trust*. Is there anything that brains and money won't do in this country?"

"No," he said, with unction.

"Well," she replied, looking away from him, but extending her hand, "you ought to have more confidence—

in yourself! Here comes Mr. Warren. There'll be tea here to-morrow at five."

Warwick was so disgusted with his failure socially—he had tasted blood for a moment—that he married Madame Jonquille, who induced him to buy an Italian title. Oglivie has never understood exactly what it all meant; he is happy, but he almost swears when any man says that it is the woman who proposes!



HEART'S INN

"OHO!" quoth Love, "'tis the Inn of the Heart,
I'll hie me thither and claim my part,
For many a guest will there have place
Who knows Love's name, but never his face!"
So unto the Inn of the Heart Love came,
And warmed him well by that hearth's flame;
Guests who had fed them and paid no fee
Stole from the presence of such as he.

Pain and Longing and gray Despair,
Slipped they back to the shadowy air;
Though the Inn was full at setting of sun
Love, of guests, was the only one,
For he peopled with dreams of radiant joy
And paid Life's coin without alloy;
At the Inn of the Heart, 'neath its purple vine,
Love fared for a night off roseate wine.

A minstrel sang; Love turned his face,
For the Inn of the Heart is a quiet place;
A vender called his wares in the street,
And the door swung back for Love's flying feet;
The door stood wide, but he fled with day;
Then silently back the same old way,
Came Longing, Despair and the older Pain,
To fill the Inn of the Heart again—

*Save for a small, sequestered room,
Where Memory spun with web and loom.*

VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD.



TRUTH may have been stranger than fiction before the days of the yellow journal.

ECHO

BEAT of feet upon the stone,
 Tap and thud and quick retreat;
 Turn of wheels innumerable
 Rolling down the sunny street.
 Oh, the rhythm of their chant
 Is some mad intoxicant!

Day and day the line leads on,
 Night and night it may not rest,
 And the heart is tuned to feel
 Its strange harmony is best,
 Till some sudden sound thrills low
 From a meadow, long ago.

ZONA GALE.



HIS MEANNESS

"I D'KNOW," said Uncle Timrod Tarpy, with an acrid puckering of his pessimistic complexion, "as I am hully in favor of higher education. It broadens its possessor considerable, I presume, but it confers pains and privations on them that haven't got it.

"There's a professor—I d'know what he professes, and it don't pertickerly matter, anyhow—livin' up to the city, who has got a yeller-haired and plump sort of flittery wife who is Summer-boardin' out here, and every day while he's away from her he writes her a postal-card, the contents of which, if you can logically so call what is written on the back of a postal, by all precedent is the perquisite of the gimlet-nosed old maid postmistress here in the village; but, unfortunately, and, I may say, soullessly, he always writes the messages in Latin. The postmistress is rapidly growing gray and wild-eyed under her load of care and unverified suspicions, and her friends are suffering from stagnation and despondency, owing to her inability to supply them with their regular rations of gossip and surmises. If they all go crazy it'll be the fault of that 'ere conscienceless professor and his everlasting Latin!"



A GUILTY CONSCIENCE

CRAWFORD—Why don't you give your wife the diamond necklace she wants?
 CRABSHAW—If I give her anything as expensive as that she would be sure to think there was something up.

AN INTERLUDE

By Gertrude Lynch

“**I**T is typhoid.”
“It is what? Nonsense!”
“Typhoid — walking, you know.”

“Walking typhoid? It can’t be.”

“It is.” The physician examined a small irregularity on his finger-nail, and proceeded to remedy it with his pocket-knife.

“I tell you, you are mistaken. Walking typhoid” — and curiosity overmastering irritation — “where does it walk?”

“In your case to the Rawlston Hospital in one hour.”

“Nonsense! I won’t go there, and I can’t be sick. I haven’t time. There are at least three important engagements I must keep.”

George Weekes was apparently used to ignoring remonstrance.

“My dear fellow, an hour is all you can have; I won’t be responsible for the consequences after that. You’re in for a siege, and you might just as well make up your mind to it.”

“But typhoid fever takes such a deuce of a time.”

“You should have thought of that a year ago. I told you then, if you didn’t stop the pace, where it would land you. You can’t burn the candle at both ends.”

“Don’t make obvious remarks. You’ll be saying next that a stitch in time saves nine. Burn the candle at both ends? I’ve done it all my life; it’s only when one sets it off midway that there is trouble.”

George Weekes arose suddenly, reached for a near-by brandy flask, and administered some of its contents.

After the collapse was over, Wilmot

—laid full length on the couch, white and weak, with eyes that looked like holes burned in a blanket—said, querulously, to the retreating figure:

“It’s all right; leave me alone to die. What do you care? That’s the worst of having a friend for your doctor; absolutely heartless, gloats over your misery. Suppose you want to go where it is more cheerful. Trot along; don’t mind me.”

“I am going into the next room to telephone.”

“Telephone? Whatsyougoingto-tele—?”

He revived again after more brandy, and George Weekes continued his interrupted explanation.

“I am going to telephone to the hospital, for a four-wheeler, and to your office.”

The patient was quiet; only his big eyes looked reproach.

When the physician returned, and sat down again by his side, Wilmot said, meekly:

“You don’t care a rap except to make your old fees out of the dead and dying; friendship’s nothing to you. I tell you I’m not sick, never felt better; just a little weakness, that’s all. It’ll go away if you don’t bullyrag me into having something you can experiment with. Do you think I can be sick now with that affair with May Iffley at the critical point?”

“It’s May Iffley this trip?”

“Don’t be coarse; that’s the worst of the medical profession, they are absolutely without any of the finer feelings.”

Meeting with no response, unless a second reading of his pulse could be

termed one, the patient turned on his side, and continued:

"She's the only woman I ever really loved—and wanted to marry. She's a widow, worth half-a-million, and her husband lived only a day after the ceremony; all the advantages of widowhood, without being able to extol her husband's domestic qualities. Fifty dollars for roses last month, but Worth and Haley are running me close. If I drop out now I lose the game. No woman of her attractions is going to wait for a man to have typhoid fever. It's the one that stays in the game that wins out. I won't have a ghost of a chance."

His listener was absolutely invulnerable to emotion. He resumed the care of his filbert-shaped nails, and looked bored.

"I suppose I can write to her before I go?"

"Certainly." George Weekes arose, placed a writing-stand at the side of the couch, and helped his friend into a sitting position.

After several ineffectual attempts, Wilmot said: "Duce take it! I can't even hold the pen, it wobbles so. I believe you're right, after all, dear old fellow. Forgive my abuse, won't you? I'll have to let the widow go until I get well. Perhaps she'll hear of it, and it may work on her sympathies. You can't tell about women. I knew all about them when I was sixteen. I don't know a thing to-day. Kipling is just as far off as the rest of us."

"You had better stop talking," said Dr. Weekes; "you are getting delirious."

Wilmot was quiet for a few minutes; then his self-control was again shattered.

"What does a fellow do when he's in a hospital for a long time? Is there anything to amuse him?"

"Nurses," said Dr. Weekes, laconically.

"By Jove! I forgot; so there are. Good-looking ones?"

"Matter of taste. Patients always fall in love with them."

"But, Weekes, I can't marry a hospital nurse."

"No?—ever tried?"

"Don't be a fool. I can't afford it," with irritation. "I hope they aren't very pretty. Don't give me a very pretty one, will you?"

"They're all pretty up at that hospital."

"But what'll I do if I should fall in love? You know a man's more or less of a fool when he's sick."

"I had noticed that."

Roused, half by excitement, half by fever, Wilmot rose to a sitting position.

"Now, look here, George. You've got to promise to protect me, or I won't go a step to your confounded old hospital. You know my weakness. I can't help falling in love with a pretty woman—I simply can't. No, I've never tried, and it's too late now; but, somehow, the women I know understand that sort of thing, and don't expect me, just because I say I love them, to ask them to marry me. They'd hate to just as much as I would; but it's different with a woman like that. She takes life seriously. I'd hate to have such a woman fall in love with me, and then have to tell her the truth."

"Your sensitiveness does you credit."

"Don't grieve me. I'm a sick man; no one can tell how this will turn out, and I don't want to leave a prospective wife. Help me, old chap."

The patient was nearing the stage of delirium, and the physician humored him.

"I'll do what I can."

"Promise you'll give me a nurse without front teeth or back hair."

"I can't do that, but I'll give you the least dangerous one there."

"Thanks. I'll do as much for you some time."

The voice trailed off into silence, and, with only intermittent moments of consciousness, Wilmot knew nothing more until he awoke in a fresh, white bed, to look at some walls destitute of distracting ornaments, and a small table with bottles and other sick-room paraphernalia.

There was a charming young woman sitting in a chair at his side.

She arose at the mute look of interrogation, and came toward him.

She was tall, slight, with a fresh, bright color, brilliant eyes, and was dressed becomingly in the regulation uniform, whose classic severity suited her perfectly.

She answered the question in the upturned eyes.

"I am the nurse. Would you like a glass of water?"

"The nurse?" Wilmot made a repellent gesture on the counterpane with his thin fingers.

"When does that fool Weekes come again?"

"Dr. Weekes?"

"Oh, I suppose he's a doctor. If you won't repeat it, I'll tell you something else he is, too."

"I never betray confidences of the sick-room; but do you think you ought to talk?"

"Yes; I'm going to say just this one thing. Weekes is a liar."

"A liar? Oh, no!" she spoke gently, as she would to a refractory child. "I don't believe you mean that. He spoke so well of you; said you were a particular friend and that we were to give you every attention."

"Oh, Weekes is a good fellow, but he will lie."

She stood stiffly. "He has never lied to me. He is considered the soul of honor in the hospital, and the older physicians simply adore him."

"Oh, I don't suppose he'd lie professionally, but where women are concerned, my dear girl, you can't trust him as far as you can see him."

The nurse retreated to her seat.

"You are not to talk any more, please; if you do, I shall have to leave you."

"I don't want to talk," he answered, with as much decision as his weakness would allow. He turned his eyes in an expression of hopeless admiration on her, and did not withdraw them until, embarrassed, she made excuse to take a position behind the bed and out of their focus.

He awoke from a delirious night to find her standing by him, fresh and

smiling, with some cool drink in her hands. She raised his head, and, when he fell back on the pillow refreshed, he clung to her as one in danger clings to a trusty staff.

He tried to hold her hand longer than the situation, strenuous as it was, would seem to demand. She withdrew it smilingly, as she would have answered the advances of a boy.

"You don't understand," he said, his voice shaken by the night's fever and the morning's reaction. "Your hand is so beautiful I wanted to hold it."

Her color heightened a little, and she said, reproachfully: "You mustn't talk that way, Mr. Wilmot; if you do——"

She did not complete the threat, but busied herself with glasses and medicine.

He was quieted by the underlying strength of a mind apparently used to acting on its decisions, and contented himself by asking occasional questions concerning his illness, while she performed her morning duties, subtly avoiding his unwavering glance of admiration.

When Dr. Weekes called the next time, and the usual sick-room amenities had been exchanged, Wilmot asked, with as much indignation as his weakness would permit:

"What do you mean by breaking your word to me?"

"Breaking my word?"

"About the nurse. You said you would fix it so I couldn't fall in love, and you've picked out the gem of the collection. I've seen some of the rest of them, and I'm glad I have to take opiates; if I should be compelled to look at the night nurse through the long watches, I wouldn't be responsible for the consequences. But Miss Kitty——"

"Miss Kitty?"

"Her name, you know, is Kitty Lincoln. I call her Miss Kitty for short; one can't say all that every time one wants a drink of water."

"You are getting on."

"Oh, yes, famously—if it wasn't

for the widow. Have you heard anything about her?"

"Not yet."

"She probably doesn't know. I'm going to get Miss Kitty to write her."

"Yes?"

Wilmot stopped a little while to gain strength for his recital, then proceeded, slowly:

"You see, I'm afraid I shall fall in love with her, and if I can only convince her in the beginning that there is some one else, I shall be much safer."

Dr. Weekes interrupted to take his temperature. "H'm! I thought so. No more talking. You are to keep perfectly quiet. I won't let you excite yourself."

"But let me say just this one thing."

"Go on."

"Why did you tell me that Miss Kitty hadn't front teeth or back hair?"

"I said nothing of the kind. I simply said she was the least dangerous nurse here."

"My dear fellow, you're as callous as a rock. Oh, those eyes!" His fingers scrawled zodiacs on the counterpane. "They're getting in their deadly work! And did you ever see such a complexion?—peaches and cream! It isn't all flesh and blood, either—I'm not that kind; it's her mind. She's awfully attractive every way you look. If it were only her mind, or her soul, or her face—but the combination—Jove! I'm in a fix."

He became slightly incoherent, and Dr. Weekes listened with a smile, half-bored, half-amused—the expression that a physician employs to a refractory patient. The subject was renewed a few days later.

"Weekes, you don't know what it means to marry one woman when your whole life is bound up with another. I've been here only a couple of weeks, I know, but you can do a lot of falling in love in a short time when you're ill, and I know that I shall never care for another woman. But I couldn't marry her—I must marry the widow; there is all that money involved, and, then, one must marry a woman in one's own set; it saves complications and explana-

tions." He clutched the sheet frantically. "I do love her."

Dr. Weekes pushed him back on the sheet, and said, authoritatively:

"Stop talking nonsense. Miss Lincoln is a very sensible girl; if you talk such stuff to her she'll drop the case, and you'll miss a good nurse. She's the most competent young woman here. I warn you."

"You don't suppose I'd take advantage of her, do you?" the patient muttered, wearily, as he closed his eyes.

A few mornings later, he awoke after a sleep induced by opiates, his mouth parched, his body wasted by illness, his mind in that curiously incoherent state which fever induces, where the trifle is magnified into importance, and the important becomes without value; where the real and the ideal blend, and the improbable is the only solution of presented problems.

She was sitting, fresh, cool and alert, waiting to minister to his needs.

He beckoned her with scrawny fingers, and with mute gestures invited her to sit by his side.

She smoothed the pillow, and then came to the edge of the bed.

"I want to say something to you."

"Do you think you should talk?"

"You're always putting me off that way. I won't be silenced any more. I'm not a child. I know what I want."

"Well?"

"I want to have a serious talk with you. This can't go on any longer. We must have an explanation."

"I don't know what you mean. Is there anything you wish? Haven't you been well taken care of? Has the night nurse neglected you? Do tell me. Don't hesitate a moment on account of my feelings——"

"That's it; it's your feelings. I don't want to hurt them."

"I am sure you do not. What is it?"

She was used to the querulous exaggerations of patients, and waited smilingly to humor his caprice.

"It's just a matter between you and me. You know I love you."

"Mr. Wilmot——"

"Now, don't pretend. I'm too sick. I can't cope with coquetry; only, I'm a man of honor, and I won't take advantage of the present situation of affairs—a situation—" he gestured wanly in the air—"which has come upon me without the volition of either."

"Yes, yes."

"I want to say this: I can't help loving you—you're the most beautiful and most womanly woman I have ever known; but——"

"But?"

He stroked her hand gently with his hot fingers, and closed his eyes. It was hard to say, and it is always easier to say difficult things with the eyes closed.

"You know I'm sick and weak, and don't seem to be able to control my will as I can when I'm well. I suppose it's the drugs and things. I'm going to make love to you, and mean it, too; but, you understand—don't make it harder for me to say—if I were well, I should be more—oh, what is the word I want?"

He drummed restlessly on the glass he was holding.

"What word?" She sat down, and looked at him thoughtfully, without embarrassment or self-consciousness, while she weighed synonyms to fit the case.

"Perhaps you mean restrained?"

"Yes, that's it. I should be more restrained. I shouldn't say the things I'm going to. I shouldn't make love to you, even if I did want to, because—because——"

She smiled, understandingly. "Yes, I know. There is some one else?"

"You're such a dear girl—so feminine, so sympathetic." He made several passes in the air trying to grasp the hand which eluded without seeming to.

"Won't you let me hold it for a minute? I'm so weak I seem to be floating right away out of life, and I must have something to hold me back."

She took his hand and held it firmly, sympathetically, and, in a few moments, he dropped off to sleep.

The next morning he said, half-joyously, half-boyishly, "So it's all arranged?"

"All arranged?"

"Yes; don't you remember?" and he looked at her with reproachful eyes which the thin contour of his face made more expressive. "I was to make love to you, and you were to understand——"

"That you didn't mean it? Oh, yes; I remember now."

"I can tell you how beautiful you are, and how I adore you, and hold your hand, and, perhaps——"

"I didn't say you could hold my hand, and—and—perhaps. You see, I rather need it; it would be awkward."

"Don't tease me; I'm too ill. Turn your head a little that way; yes, that's right. You know when the light falls on your hair—well, I don't care if I'm sick seven years. I wonder if it wasn't typhoid fever Jacob had instead of an unnatural desire to work. I'm sure it was."

"Isn't this nice?" he murmured, later, in the course of the illness which ran with undeviating monotony, the only change from day to day being a slight irregularity of temperature and pulse.

"Nice?" She looked about the cool room with its snowy draperies; at the open window where a slight breeze ruffled the branches of a locust-tree outside, whose fan-like leaves tapped the casing rhythmically; at the spotless purity of the surroundings; through the door where soft-footed nurses passed, smilingly.

"Yes, it's all very nice; I love it. I adore my work."

"Oh, I didn't mean that—it's clean enough, if you like, but if there's anything a man hates it's a sick-room. I meant our—oh, you know, our little affair. I've never been just this way before; always there has been a sense of instability. I had to hedge and back water and all that, but"—he leaned on his pillow with a sigh of perfect content—"this feeling of absolute security is the most delightful thing."

She looked into his eyes, and smiled gravely.

"You don't care for danger? I have heard that a man values only what there is trouble in acquiring."

"Oh, that's true in a limited sense—not entirely. I don't think half-way dangers are particularly fascinating. It must be a danger big enough to grip you so that you breathe hard, and your heart beats like a trip-hammer, and you're tense with dread; or else, to be perfectly happy, one must be perfectly secure. One must know that nothing can happen that will shake the foundations; in the midst of an earthquake there would be safety. Only those two conditions are possible. Half-way stages are simply irritating; that is the reason so often that the irritation finally becomes the stronger force and kills the other—love, affection, whatever it may be called."

There was a little heightening of color; then she soothed him gently: "You mustn't talk any more now. You make me forget that I am your nurse and you are my patient."

She gave him his medicine, and, taking a book, sat a little way from him, out of reach of his voice, but not of his eyes, which followed her with dog-like devotion.

"I saw May Ifley on the street yesterday," said Dr. Weekes, a few days after this conversation. "She was in a tremendous hurry, getting ready to sail on the fifteenth."

"London again? Seems to me she spends a lot of time there."

"So she said. I suppose a woman of her type can keep her balance only by going on the other side occasionally."

"Did she say anything about me?"

"Oh, she asked for you incidentally; forgot to wait for the answer, confided to me that typhoid was a dreadful thing, a brother of a third cousin of her dearest friend had had it once—you know the way she talks—Social Register style; hoped it wouldn't leave you scarred; seemed to get it mixed up with smallpox and first love."

"I don't care. Did she say how long she would be away?"

"Six weeks; just long enough for you to convalesce and be in fighting trim."

"It'll take longer than that. I feel as if I were in for a long siege."

"Don't worry. We'll have you out soon."

Dr. Weekes was pleased at his patient's condition, and showed his delight by other persiflage.

"Any more reconciled to your nurse? Still resenting the teeth and hair?"

Wilmot scowled. "We won't discuss her, please; there are some subjects a materialist like you should avoid."

"And Miss Lincoln is one?"

"Decidedly. She's not in your class. You could no more understand the inherent purity and nobleness of that woman's character than I can understand Siwash."

Miss Lincoln came in at that moment, and the conversation was limited to sick-room amenities.

She followed the doctor to the corridor, as usual. "Don't excite him," he said, in a low tone; "give him his own way as much as possible; amuse him, talk to him, but don't contradict him, whatever you do."

When she returned to the bedside, Wilmot had a new expression.

"What is it?" she asked, as their eyes met.

"Weekes just told me a bit of good news. She's gone."

She held a spoon to his lips, and then brushed them off softly. She seated herself at his side.

"You are really glad?"

"Yes, I'm free until she returns—six weeks. It's been a bore, in a way, knowing that I couldn't do what was expected of me."

"But I thought you said there was really nothing between you?"

"There isn't; but, of course, she understands; she's got too much money to have any doubt of a man's attentions. But circumstance has decided that I couldn't see her even if I were well, so I needn't worry. I am all yours. There is not even a thought of infidelity or restlessness. I am perfectly happy, and—and you?"

"I? Oh, I am always happy with my work."

"I don't mind your putting it that way," he responded, boyishly; "I'm your work at present."

Her eyes fell, and she turned away.

A few days after, they had been sitting quietly for a long time. She had finished a stanza of poetry, but his mind was inattentive; he was watching through the window a bird balancing itself on a bough, and listening to the hum of insects which formed an accompaniment to her voice. He interrupted her. "Will you do something for me?"

"Certainly."

He put his hand under the pillow, and drew out a ring. "It slipped off; I can't wear it any more." He had been accustomed to wearing it on his fourth finger. He took her hand, and placed the ring caressingly. She looked at it thoughtfully, and then, drawing it off, proceeded to place it on her other hand.

"It is a beautiful ring," she said, meditatively, turning it so that the light fell full on the blood-red stone. "I think it looks better on this hand."

"I don't want it on that hand; I want it on this," and he pointed to the engagement finger.

"But——"

"I want my own way. You are to wear it until——"

"Until you get well. You are not afraid to trust me?"

"Trust you—do you still doubt me, after this?" and he touched the ring, significantly.

The days wore on, one so like another that there was nothing to chronicle. Wilmot showed no overwhelming desire to get well, and his recovery beyond a certain point was so slow that Dr. Weekes became restive. "I believe you could exert yourself more if you tried," he said once, impatiently.

Wilmot smiled subtly, but gave his physician little further satisfaction.

"I suppose what he says is true," he remarked, later, to his nurse, as they sat chatting in the late afternoon, while the soft twilight enveloped them. In

the corridor, the lamps were being lighted.

"You will soon be well enough to go."

"It won't be long now." There was a significant pause. He broke it, impetuously.

"When are we to be married?"

"Married? If you talk that way I shall tell Dr. Weekes that you are not to leave until your head is better."

"I wish my heart was as steady as my head. You didn't answer me."

"You are not well enough yet to talk on exciting subjects."

"You are always like that—putting me off. I never saw any one so elusive. It's all very well when a woman isn't sure, but as soon as she knows a man cares for her—why should she torment him?"

"You are sure?"

"Absolutely. I haven't thought of another woman for two months. When is it to be?"

She spoke, decisively. "You must be quiet. It's not too late yet for you to have a relapse."

"Relapse—nonsense! You won't tell me?"

"Some time." She took up a book, and sat at a little distance, as was her habit when he became unmanageable.

He pretended to sleep, but, in reality, through his half-closed eyes, he watched her closely, as he had watched her before. He looked at the beautiful, calm face; at the head so proudly set on the tall, slender neck; at the broad shoulders. What a place, he thought, for a weary man to lay his head! She was so well poised, so gentle, so womanly—what more could any man desire?

Yet the returning life was in his veins, and, after a moment, he closed his eyes, and did not open them again until she had gone.

It was about a month later. Wilmot sat in an easy-chair in his own rooms. Except for the clearness of his complexion and languor of gesture, there was no external sign of the siege through which he had passed.

Opposite him sat Courtenay. They had been college friends in earlier days, and golf friends of late.

There had been one of those masculine silences which punctuate the conversation, and admit no law of small talk, being articulate only when there is something to say.

"Suppose you knew Mrs. Iffley is on her way home?"

"No, I hadn't heard."

There was another pause, redolent with smoke; then Courtenay took up the dropped ball.

"Thought you were sweet on her, old fellow, before you got sick."

"So did I."

Courtenay did not attempt to leap the barrier. He contented himself with another cigar and another change of subject.

"By Jove, that was a pretty woman you had for nurse!"

"When did you see her?"

"Met Weekes, who took me through the place; wanted to show me your cage, he said."

"She pulled me through all right; typhoid's just a matter of nursing, you know."

"So I've heard. Tell me," he paused a moment, "how does a man help falling in love with a charming woman like that when he's sick?"

"He doesn't."

"But—how does he get out of it afterward?"

"He doesn't—always."

There was another barrier, which necessitated another cigar; as the two subjects offered had proved dangerous, Courtenay contented himself with retailing club gossip.

After he had gone, Wilmot sat in an irritated silence.

The two balked phrases were fighting for supremacy in his mind. Mrs. Iffley was on her way home, and there was nothing to prevent his taking up the dropped thread of their acquaintance. He felt in better trim for it now; the fever had, in a way, rejuvenated him; the enforced quiet, the absence of excitement, the calm hours of convalescence were bearing the fruits of

reaction, and he longed for the fray. He hoped that his rivals were still held in leash. He did not desire a bloodless victory. He thought out one or two lines of attack, and bit his cigar, grimly.

Then the other note of Courtenay's refrain sang in his ears: How did a man get out of it afterward?

It was three weeks since he had left the hospital and taken up the old life. He had contented himself with sending a basket of roses, but not a line had passed. He wondered what she thought. Did she care? Did she understand? Understand what? Did he himself understand?

He had hedged about his little love-affair of the hospital with caution hidden under a subtle reserve. His love had been partly fever, but was not love always partly fever? His pulse quickened at the mere remembrance of the twilight hours in the hospital, with the yellow gleams of the corridor-lamps, the gray light stealing in and enveloping them, the sounds of soft-approaching and softer-retreating feet, the peculiar odors of the sick-room mingled with the fragrance of the flowers by which his friends had emphasized their regret. No, indeed; the fever was still with him.

He need never go back. He could treat the whole matter as a joke if he desired. Had he not expressly said to her, in the beginning of his illness, that she was not to take him seriously, and had she not acquiesced? She had allowed him, always weak where a pretty woman was concerned, to yield to his impulses, and their love-affair was a mere zigzag in the path of life.

He moved the elbow which rested on the table with a quick gesture—the physical expression of mental unease. He wished he had not gone quite so far—to ask her to wear his ring and to speak of marriage.

Well, at least he had placed the ring there with a peradventure, and when she had accused him of being light-headed as he spoke of marriage, he had not contradicted.

He was safe, and it is a great thing

to be safe in these days of ready altars.

Yet safety meant divorce from danger, and there is an alluring fascination about the edge of things, that breathless standpoint where one has to balance one's self with care.

If she were only a different type of woman, if she would only allow him to wear out his feelings in days of futile and weakening attraction!

But to go back to her meant more than the surface interpretation. He could no longer make love to her under the shield of irresponsible sickness; he could never see her again—unless——

He took up the evening paper which had been laid on the table, the type still wet.

There was a scare headline:

"SHE WILL WED AN ENGLISH BARONET."

His first thought was what an amusing appearance that name Iffley made in big type; his second, what bearing the accompanying story, which he read carefully, had on his own future.

So May Iffley had been engaged secretly for months, all the time that she had kept him, with Worth and Haley and heaven knew how many more, running a neck-to-neck race. She had displayed a becoming decency to her dead husband's memory, so the newspaper stated, a fact which would be believed by the thousands who only need to be told what to think of what they read.

It was well that circumstance had helped him. If he had not had the fever just when he did, what a fool he might have made of himself! He certainly would have done so, for he had exhibited all the premonitory symptoms before he was stricken down.

It was just as well that he had never really cared for her—not a little bit. She was the type of woman who, after marriage, would ask to have her chair handed for her to sit in, would speak loudly of "my" horse and "my" house.

He gazed at the headline, reflectively. He wondered if he would have one—should he marry Kitty Lincoln—"Romance of a Hospital," or something like that. He disliked publicity, but, thinking that Mrs. Iffley might read it, there was a desire for the dramatic in his mind. She would know then that he had never really cared; that he had not been fooled; that, all the time she had been smiling at his discomfiture, ranking him with Worth and Haley as fortune-hunters, she had been as alien to his emotions as he had been to hers.

But, merely to revenge himself on Mrs. Iffley, would it be worth while to sacrifice his future? His future—what was it? There was a moment of seriousness. What had women like Mrs. Iffley ever been to him but obstacles in a path toward something better, and that something better—was it represented by Kitty Lincoln and her kind?

While he sat with the paper on his knees, Dr. Weekes came in. He felt Wilmot's pulse with his accustomed manner, as if the latter were still a patient, and, the mocking reminiscence of past hours finished, touched him on the shoulder, good-humoredly.

"Right as a trivet; all the better for your little inning; you'll take care of yourself now."

"You'll be telling me to marry and settle down next."

"Not a bad thing for you, my boy."

"I suppose you saw that Mrs. Iffley——"

"Yes, read it on the L; good thing. The sooner the country is clear of that type of woman, the better."

They were silent a moment, digesting the remark. Wilmot wondered if the physician was thinking, as he was, of a different type of woman.

He wanted to talk about her. All at once, the three weeks which had intervened since he left the hospital seemed a long time. Much might have happened—his heart beat a little in fright—perhaps she had gone away; she might even be dead and he not know.

He did not try to fence, but came to the point.

"Tell me what you meant when you said to me before I went to the hospital that you considered Kitty Lincoln the least dangerous nurse there."

"Did I say that?"

"You used exactly those words; they have haunted me ever since seeing her. By Jove! if that woman isn't dangerous, who is?"

Dr. Weekes leaned forward, and lighted his cigar at the spirit-lamp.

There was just a moment's pause, as if he were weighing his words.

"You see, my dear fellow, when you were taken with the fever, we were just about to be married."

Wilmot sat up; the paper fell from his knees to the floor.

Dr. Weekes smiled indulgently at his agitation.

"We didn't mean to make any fuss about it; just go around the corner, you know; but, when I saw your condition, I was scared; I had just lost two

men with typhoid. I asked her to put off the wedding so she could take care of you—there was no one else at the hospital I would trust you with."

He looked at his watch reflectively, compared it with the clock on the mantel, and continued:

"She got interested in your case, and so did I; it was a toss-up for a few days. After you left she took a short rest. We were married last week."

After Dr. Weekes had gone, Wilmot found a small package on the table. He opened it. It contained the ring he had put on Kitty Lincoln's finger. There was not a line of handwriting. He wondered what it all meant. It seemed to him that he had been pretty much of a fool. He was rather glad that he had not really cared; it would have been so unpleasant! He walked restlessly about the room. He wished——

What did he wish? He did not know.



THE LINKS IN WINTER

FROM tee to tee, across the sweet,
Warm grass that yielded to my feet,
With breeze and sunshine all a-glow,
Short skirt, head bare—I liked it so—
I drove, when Summer days were fleet.

Alas! those days again to greet
Where Sport and Pleasure, laughing, meet!
Blithe as the birds, no more I go
From tee to tee!

Now, gloved and bonneted complete,
With swaying crowds, in hum and heat,
Where tea and gossip mingled flow,
Joyless but smiling, *comme il faut*,
I drive—along the rattling street—
From tea to tea!

MARGARET JOHNSON.

THE HUNDREDTH NIGHT

By E. Phillips Oppenheim

THE woman sat alone in her dressing-room. For the second act, her costume needed no change—a dash of powder, a trifling rearrangement of the hair, had completed in a few seconds her necessary preparations. She had dismissed her maid, and denied herself to a lady journalist who represented a fashion paper, and wanted to talk about her dresses. She felt the need of solitude.

The girl with the large dark eyes—who was she? Had she been looking into a mirror, back down the long avenue of years to the days of her own girlhood, when she, too, had gazed out upon life with something of the same mysterious wonder? Fashions move always in a circle. She, too, had twisted her hair somewhat in that fashion, had worn a rose instead of a ribbon, had sought with something of the same almost plaintive eagerness to understand, if only dimly, the life which throbbed on every side of her. Who was she? A ghost? An actual unit of the audience, a living and breathing person, or a creature of the fancy only? The violins of the orchestra swayed less and less, the music died away. There was silence, and then the tinkling of a little bell. The curtain had risen.

In a few minutes, she was on the stage again, face to face with a situation round which, even in these days of the play's assured success, controversy raged fiercely. A false note, and daring became grossness; a gesture, even a look, and the forbidden was manifest. To conceal it utterly was the most exquisite triumph of art. That night, perhaps for the first time

in her life, the woman wholly succeeded.

Again the curtain fell amidst a storm of applause, and again the woman sat abstracted and thoughtful in her dressing-room. This time she was not left undisturbed. A man came in to her, tall, graceful, but with the tired face and wrinkled brows of premature age. She took no notice of his entrance. He paused to light a cigarette.

"I congratulate you," he remarked, drily.

"Upon what?"

"Your versatility. You have given a new rendering of *Mona* to-night. You have stripped her of the flesh, lifted her wholly off the clogging earth. But I warn you, Emily, the critics won't like it."

"The critics!"

"People are so like sheep. They need some one to direct them. They do not see the ass's skin, only the mantle of the prophet. And our friends of the press do not like to be trifled with."

The woman sat still, with her back to him. The perfume of his cigarette, his presence in her room, the easy nonchalance of his manner, stung her. She still looked into the mirror, and still she saw the same things.

"I must play the part," she said, in a low tone, "as I feel it."

"Is not that," he remarked, holding his cigarette thoughtfully between his fingers, "a little hard upon those who have to play up to you? Last night you were flesh and blood, the arrogant courtesan, a marvelous creation. You almost frightened me with the reality of it, and one could hear the audience holding their breaths—it was supreme.

To-night you rise phoenix-like to a virtue which holds evil things abashed. If you are the actual courtesan, you are also the embodiment of all the opposite things in life. It may be a triumph in originality—your rendering, I mean—but it is deuced uncomfortable for me."

The woman smiled, faintly. She understood quite well the reason of his annoyance. He was the puppet-actor, born of the times, only possible in this period of uninspired plays, a man of graceful presence and musical voice, who owed his position to these things, and these things only. The genius that made it possible for her suddenly to purify a situation which it was rumored had worried the King's censor, had fired no answering impulse in his slower wits. His acting had been constrained and unimpressive. He had felt himself at sea, and he had shown it. Man-like, he was aggrieved. He had been robbed of his meed of applause, the only stimulant not wholly physical which appealed to him. This was the hundredth night, too, and the critics were in the stalls.

"I am glad that you felt the change," the woman said, slowly. "Why not adapt yourself to it?"

"Why change?" he answered, irritably. "The piece went well enough before. You seem to be trying to transform a magnificent piece of realism into an idyll. At this theatre, we do not play to school-children."

She abandoned the subject a little abruptly. It did not interest her to discuss these things with him.

"I wonder," she said, "if you know who some people are, in the third row of the stalls—two elderly ladies, rather oddly dressed, and a child with large eyes."

He prided himself upon knowing everybody, and he did not fail her.

"Two old maids from the wilds of Scotland, and their niece," he answered. "Nugent Campbell, their name is, I think—the girl's father is the Sir Henry Nugent Campbell who did so well out at the war. Beautiful eyes, hasn't she?"

He was examining himself negligently in the mirror; the fold of his tie did not altogether please him, or was it his pin that was a trifle crooked? Presently, however, he glanced toward her. She was sitting quite still, and her hands were clasping the arms of the chair. The natural pallor of her complexion seemed intensified. There were things in her face which he did not understand.

"You're seedy, Emily," he exclaimed. "Let me ring for your woman. Have some wine, will you?"

She moved her head toward the door.

"Go away!" she said.

"Nonsense! I can't leave you like this. The curtain will be up in five minutes. Let me get you a glass of champagne."

"Cannot you see that I wish to be alone?" she said. "I am quite well. Please go away."

He shrugged his shoulders and departed, closing the door behind him. From outside came a momentary wave of strangely mingled sounds, the shifting of heavy scenery, the murmur of conversation from the audience, of muffled laughter from the wings, the throbbing of violins from the orchestra. Then the door closed, and there was silence. The woman rose swiftly, and turned the key in the lock.

The duke stopped his sisters on their way out. He addressed them with a severity which was belied by the twinkle in his eyes.

"Amelia!" he exclaimed. "I am astonished. Fancy bringing the child to see a play like this!"

Amelia, who had had qualms, looked at him, anxiously.

"I am very sorry, Robert, but I had no one to consult, and they assured me at the library that it was quite the thing to see. If you had kept your promise and come in to tea yesterday afternoon, I had a list of plays which I had intended to submit to you."

"You mustn't scold aunt," the girl declared, smiling up at him. "I have never enjoyed anything so much in

my life. If only it were not so sad!"

"You were lucky to-night, anyhow," he remarked. "I have never seen Emily Royce act like that before."

"She is beautiful," the girl murmured. "How I should love to see her off the stage!"

The duke hesitated, and then laughed to himself.

"You shall," he said. "I'm going behind. Hundredth-night celebration, you know, and I'll take you if you like."

The girl's eyes were bright with joy.

"Auntie, do you hear?" she exclaimed. "Isn't it glorious? Do you mean that I shall really see her to speak to?"

"Robert! You are joking, of course," Miss Amelia exclaimed. "You do not seriously propose to take that child behind the scenes?"

He smiled. "Why not? I'll take all of you. Huntingdon will be delighted, and it's quite the thing to do, I assure you. Your friend, Lady Martin, and her daughters have gone."

Miss Amelia sighed. "I am sorry to disappoint Esther," she said, "and I do not dispute what you say, Robert, but I cannot part with all my old prejudices so easily. I do not approve of the theatre. I will not sacrifice my principles to the extent of accepting hospitality from the ladies and gentlemen who have been kind enough to amuse us."

The duke nodded his head approvingly. He thoroughly enjoyed his sisters.

"Quite right," he remarked, "quite right. Never mind, Esther," he added, seeing her gallant effort to hide her disappointment, "I'll take you. You'll find my carriage outside, Amelia. Take it home, and send it back to the stage door for us. I'll look after Esther."

"You dear!" the child exclaimed, clinging to his arm. "You don't mind, Aunt Amelia?"

Miss Amelia sighed. "Your uncle

would not suggest anything unfitting, my dear," she said. "Our approval is, of course, quite another matter."

So, presently, Esther found herself in the strangest place she had ever imagined in her life. She was on the stage, shut off now from the house by the drop-curtain, and thronged with crowds of men and women in evening dress. Servants in livery were handing round champagne and sandwiches; all present seemed to be talking a great deal, and enjoying themselves immensely. Leverson caught sight of the new-comers presently, and came hurrying up.

"A little niece of mine from the wilds of Scotland, Leverson," the duke remarked. "Stage-struck, of course. I've brought her to see what ordinary people you all are with your war-paint off. Mr. Arthur Leverson, Miss Nugent Campbell."

The child was shy at first, but Leverson laid himself out to amuse her, and it was very easy. He showed her how the lime-light was worked, and explained the moving of the scenery. They were standing a little apart, talking, when Emily Royce came in.

"Oh, I wonder—!" the girl exclaimed, eagerly.

He looked down at her with an amused smile.

"Well?"

"Could I—would she speak to me just for a moment?"

He was a little annoyed, but he hid it admirably.

"Of course. I'll take you to her."

Emily spared him the effort. She detached herself from a little group, and came toward them. Leverson murmured the girl's name.

"I saw you in front, didn't I?" Emily said, smiling. "Somehow, I fancied that the theatre was almost a new place to you. Was I right?"

"Absolutely," the child answered. She was no longer in the least shy. No one had ever looked at her quite so kindly as this wonderful woman.

"I have never been inside the theatre before," Esther admitted. "My aunts

are—a little old-fashioned, and we live so far off from everywhere.”

“Go and talk to the Esholts, Mr. Leverson,” Emily said. “I am going to take possession of Miss Campbell for a little time.”

Leverson withdrew with a subdued grumble meant to sound good-natured, but not altogether successful. Emily made the girl sit down on a lounge by her side.

“I noticed you quite at the beginning of the play,” she said, smiling. “You seemed so absorbed, and you know we people on the stage love to act to people who are interested.”

“I think it is marvelous,” the child said, still a little shyly, “to think that any one can act like you do. I can scarcely believe that I am really here talking to you.”

“Tell me about your home in Scotland, and your life there,” Emily said. “Do you mind? I should so like to hear about it all.”

The child was ready enough to talk. She spoke of the old, gray castle, with its prim, well-ordered life; the wonderful hills, with the mystery of their inaccessible, mist-wreathed summits; the deep, tree-hung glens; the salmon river which came rushing down from some hidden spot; the purple moors always so lonely, and growing bleaker and bleaker as they rolled away northward. The woman by her side smiled and listened and prompted her every now and then with some questions. Behind it all was the strange background of gay conversation, the popping of corks, the ceaseless hurrying hither and thither of servants.

“You have very few friends, then?”

“Very few. My aunts are not fond of strangers or visitors. Sometimes it is very dull, especially when the rains come, and the whole country is hidden in mists.”

“But your father—is he never with you?”

The girl shook her head, gravely.

“Very, very seldom. He is a soldier, you know, and he is always away fighting somewhere. I think that he does not like being at home.”

The girl’s eyes, very grave and steadfast, were suddenly troubled. Something in the set immobility of Emily’s features chilled her.

“I am afraid,” she said, “that I am wearying you. I do not know why I have talked so much of my little concerns, when I would so much rather have had you tell me about your own wonderful life.”

Emily shook her head. The faint smile which parted her lips was at least reassuring.

“You do not know how interested I have been,” she said. “Some day, I hope that we shall have another talk.”

“We are in London for two months,” Esther said. “Might I come and see you?”

“I think—we must see,” was the unexpectedly evasive answer. “I shall write to you.”

A man who had just come in looked at the pair for a moment or two with a curious expression. Then he went up to the duke.

“Ernham,” he said, “did you bring your niece here?”

“By Jove, I did, and I’ve forgotten all about her,” the duke answered. “Where is she?”

“Sitting on the sofa there, talking to Emily Royce. You had better take her home.”

The duke raised his eyebrows.

“Why?”

“Do you know what Emily Royce’s name was when she first came on the stage?”

“No idea,” the duke admitted, cheerfully. “Never can remember those things.”

“Some one might have reminded you,” his friend remarked. “It was Emily Heddon.”

The duke was staggered. He looked toward the couch. This was the woman, then, whom his brother had married, and Esther—

“Great heavens!” he muttered.

“Esther, I am sorry to interrupt you, but we must go at once,” he added, a moment later.

The girl held out her hand to Emily.

"Good-bye," she said, simply. "I hope that I shall see you again."

She felt the touch of her fingers warmly enough returned, but for some reason Emily was silent.

II

THEY were sitting together in the Park—not for the first time. The girl looked very sweet and fresh in her plain muslin gown and large hat, but her clear eyes were a little troubled.

"You are so much older and wiser than I am," she said, "that I suppose you must be right. But I do not like it. I do not think I can come any more."

"But how else can I see you?" he protested. "You know that your aunts dislike the stage and everything connected with it. They would never allow me to visit them."

"It is very perplexing," she admitted. "Aunt Amelia is really very kind to me, but——"

"Perhaps," he whispered, leaning over toward her, "you do not want to see me any more."

She looked at him a little shyly. Her eyes were full of reproach. She was adorably pretty.

"It is not kind of you to say that," she murmured, "because you know that I do."

He touched her fingers for a moment, and she felt a guilty thrill of joy, inexplicable, wonderful. He had had so much experience in these matters, every little move was known to him. He began to talk, and she to listen, the color coming and going in her cheeks, a whole world of new emotions roused, quivering into life by the soft, passionate words which came so readily to his lips. Of course, he triumphed. It was a foregone conclusion, the battle altogether too one-sided. Soon he was walking by her side toward the gates.

A victoria was stopped close to them, and a woman all in white descended. She was paler even than the chiffon which hung from her parasol, but her

eyes seemed lighted with smoldering fire. Levenson swore under his breath. Even Esther felt that there was something inappropriate in the glad little cry of welcome which sprang to her lips.

"How fortunate that I should see you both!" Emily exclaimed. "Miss Campbell, I want you to do me a favor. I want you to jump straight into my carriage, and let my people take you home."

"Alone?" the child exclaimed. "But you are coming, too! May I not drive with you?"

Emily shook her head. She denied herself a great deal.

"The carriage will return for me here," she answered. "I have something particular to say to Mr. Levenson."

Mr. Levenson did not seem at all enchanted at the prospect. His appearance was, to say the least, sulky. Nevertheless, his protest was almost inarticulate, and Emily simply turned her back upon him. She saw the child into the little victoria, and waved her hand in adieu. Then she returned to Levenson. They stood face to face upon the broad path.

"My friend," she said, drily, "I hope you will believe that your flirtations and liaisons, of which I am told you are somewhat proud, are, in a general way, matters of supreme unimportance to me. In this particular case, however, I have something to say. I insist upon it that you discontinue your clandestine meetings and all correspondence with that child."

There were times when Levenson was not handsome, and this was one of them. His manner was shift, his indignation petulant.

"Really, Mrs. Royce," he said, "I scarcely see that our relations are such as to give you the right to dictate to me in such matters."

She smiled, faintly. She had been the humiliation of his life of amours, and she knew it.

"We will not discuss that," she answered. "I know you through and through, Arthur Levenson, and I am going to appeal to your only vulner-

able spot—your self-interest. You obey my wishes in this matter, or you leave the theatre."

"You are not serious?" he exclaimed.

"I am very serious indeed. I can do without you—you cannot do without me. Our play is the biggest success London has known for years, and your share in it is not worth a snap of the fingers. Yet you share with me the honors and the profit. So it shall continue unless you disobey my wishes in this matter. If you meet or speak to that child again unchaperoned, you go."

"This is monstrous!" he exclaimed.

"I have a vested right in the play."

"You might force me to withdraw it," she answered, "but that would not trouble me in the least. I am a rich woman."

He turned on his heel with a little exclamation, and walked away. Emily sat down and waited for her carriage.

The immediate effect of Emily's intervention was the following note duly delivered at Levenson's rooms on the next evening:

16, MERSHAM STREET, W.

MY DEAREST,

I have been so unhappy ever since yesterday, and you have not sent me a line. Do write and tell me what it all means. Why should Mrs. Royce mind our being together?—for I feel sure now that she did. You are not angry with me for obeying her? I was not sure what you wished me to do. You said nothing! You did not even come with me to the carriage. She stood between us, and though, when she looked at me, she seemed kind, I felt that she was very angry with you. Why? Do write me, dear, and tell me. You know that nothing could change me. I shall always be your loving,

ESTHER.

P. S.—Aunt Amelia has been so kind today. I felt that I must tell her about you. Would it matter very much, do you think?

Levenson received this note on his return from a supper-party after the theatre. He spent a few minutes in deliberation, and then sat down and answered it.

55, BLENHEIM MANSIONS, W. C.

MY OWN DEAREST CHILD,

You ask me to explain a very difficult thing, but I shall try. I am obliged to

see a great deal of Mrs. Royce, and I have so few other women friends that I fancy she has fallen into the way of considering me her own special property, to be ordered about and made use of just as suits her convenience. I swear to you, dear, that there has never been anything at all between us. I have never given her the least cause to believe that I cared for her, but you know the great fault of all the women on the stage is jealousy, and I fancy that something of that sort was the cause of Mrs. Royce's bad temper on Thursday. Please do not think me a conceited ass, dear, to tell you these things, but you asked me for the truth, and you have it.

How I have missed you! Yesterday, I really believe, was the longest and dreariest day I have ever spent. What a little witch you are, to come and steal your way so easily into my heart!

You must not tell your aunt anything yet. I shall explain all when we meet, but it would spoil everything to be in too much of a hurry. You are going down the river for Sunday, so we cannot meet till Monday. I have a little plan for then, which I hope you will like. I want you to come here, and have tea with me. There! It sounds terrible, doesn't it, but there is really nothing to fear, and it is much the safest way of meeting. I have wired to my sister to come up and stay with me so as to make everything quite right for you, but, of course, in London no one pretends to be quite so conventional as in the country. I would not ask you if it really mattered in the least, but I can assure you that up here it is quite a common thing. Do you realize, sweetheart, that, as yet, I have never really had you quite to myself? Perhaps that is why I am looking forward to Monday more than I have ever looked forward to anything in my life. You will not disappoint me, dear? No; I am sure that you will not. Get here about four o'clock, and I shall be waiting to open the door myself.

Ever your fond lover,

ARTHUR.

He despatched the note, and laughed softly to himself as he lighted a cigarette.

"She will come," he murmured. "She is such a dear little fool."

He was right. She came, but it had cost her a great effort, and even his most impressive greeting, and the touch of his arm about her waist, did not wholly reassure her. Her hands were cold, and she was trembling a little.

"Where is your sister, Arthur?" she asked, looking round the room with dark, anxious eyes.

"She will be here directly, dearest," he answered. "Her train is a little late. Come and sit down in my own easy-chair, and tell all about these last few days. Do you know that I have not yet had even one tiny little kiss from you!"

She kept him away from her for a moment. She was looking very grave, and there was even a suspicion of tears in her dark eyes.

"Arthur," she faltered, "of course, it is delightful to be here with you, but I have all the time the feeling that I have done something dreadful. Tell me, dear—please tell me the truth. Is it very horrid of me to come? Listen! Is that your sister, do you think?"

He smiled reassuringly at her, and opened his arms. For the moment, he wished that he had not invented that sister.

"Very likely, dear," he answered. "My man has orders to let no one else in. We are quite safe."

But Levenson had not reckoned with the temptation of gold to a servant whose wages were very much in arrears. The door was thrown open, and Mrs. Royce entered. Behind her was the duke. Levenson felt his rôle of heroic lover slipping away from him. His knees began to shake. He did not like the way the duke closed the door.

Emily went straight up to the child.

"My dear," she said, "you ought not to be here. You must go away."

Esther disengaged herself, not without a certain quiet dignity.

"I know that I have done wrong, Mrs. Royce," she said, "but I really do not see——"

She could not finish her sentence. Emily was humanized. Even the child saw the tenderness quivering in her soft eyes.

"Oh, I know you mean kindly," she cried, "but why do you want to come between Arthur and me? His sister will be here directly."

His sister! Emily held the child's hands tightly. The quickest blow was the kindest.

"He has told you, then, of a sister whom he does not possess; has he told you, I wonder, of a wife whom he does?"

The girl turned deathly pale. Levenson, without means of defense, turned his back upon them.

"A—a wife!"

"Mr. Levenson," Emily continued, "has a wife, singing, I believe, in an East End music-hall, and from whom he cannot procure a divorce owing to their mutual irregularities. He is a coward, and a liar, and a dishonorable person. Ask him any questions you like. I want this parting to be final."

"Will you turn around, please, Arthur?" the girl asked, quietly.

He faced them—self-proclaimed a craven. The girl looked into his face, and she turned very white. Then she turned to Emily. She did not ask him any question at all.

"I have been very foolish," she said, softly. "I did not know—that there were people like this in the world. Will you take me away?"

The duke remained behind. He was a strong man, and Levenson was a coward. Levenson did not play that night, nor for many succeeding ones.

III

A CRITIC in the stall shook open his programme.

"These revivals," he murmured, "should be prohibited. There are no plays written nowadays which can stand the test."

"You chaps always talk like that," grumbled his companion. "What do you come for?"

"Bread and cheese, of course. But come, I will be honest," the critic continued, settling down in his seat. "It is not altogether so with me in this case. If the chief hadn't sent me, I should have paid my own ten-and-six, and come, and if there hadn't been a stall, I should have brought my own camp-stool, and joined the cranks who besiege the pit."

"And if you had overslept yourself?"

"I should have taken my chance at the gallery. Failing that, I should have pawned my watch and secured a box."

"In plain words," his companion remarked, "you meant to come."

"I was bound to come," the critic said, almost gravely. "Wild horses could not have kept me away."

"Of course, you will explain," his friend murmured. "I always looked upon a real professional critic as superior to enthusiasm, curiosity or honesty. Are you going to disillusionize me?"

"Perhaps," the critic answered. "Do you really want to know why I was so keen to come?"

"Of course."

The critic folded up his programme. The orchestra were beginning to tune their violins.

"I will try and tell you, then. Forgive me if I am not very lucid. It is a very hard thing to put it all into words. The play was always a remarkable one. From the first, Emily Royce gave us a wonderful representation of the heroine. But here comes the point of it all. Up to the night of its hundredth celebration, we came to one play; from that to its three-hundredth, we came to an entirely different one. I do not believe that a single word of the play was altered. The cast, except for Levenson, who never counted seriously, remained precisely the same. And yet it was a different play. One woman's supreme genius transformed it all."

"Go on!" his companion begged. "I am interested."

"There is so little more to say," the critic continued. "For some reason or other, on the night of the hundredth performance, Emily Royce chose to transform her whole rendering of the part. That accounts for the extraordinary diversity of opinion you meet with concerning the play. There are women who say that when they came they preferred a dark seat, and would sooner have taken their daughters to

the old Moulin Rouge. There are others of equal discernment and judgment, who protest that it is the purest and most moral play they have ever seen. Both are right. A woman's genius lifted it from the grim fascination of inimitable, but awful, realism to an idyll. Psychologically, I have never met with such an interesting circumstance. I have the idea, somehow, that the change was a momentary inspiration of Emily Royce's. I do not believe that Levenson, for instance, on that hundredth night, knew where he was. He had not the wit to adapt himself, and he floundered horribly. Emily Royce did well to get rid of him. He was always an overrated man. Now, we shall see."

Half-way through the first act, his friend whispered to the critic:

"Which is it going to be?"

"The realism!" the critic answered. "Look at that gesture! Ugh!"

A little party who had arrived late stole into their places, a tall, gray-haired man, followed by a younger one, both deeply bronzed, both obviously soldiers—a beautiful girl with wonderful eyes, and the duke. The critic reached suddenly for his glasses.

"Watch Emily Royce," he whispered. "She is ill."

She certainly swayed for a moment, and seemed to forget her part. The time for her exit had arrived. She cut a wonderful speech and departed, leaving the audience unimpressed. The curtain fell upon the act, and the critic sighed.

"I am sorry I came," he said. "She has lost her power. That speech was the crucial point, and she lost her nerve. What a pity."

Nevertheless, an hour or so later the critic showed that he was human. He, too, with all those others, stood up and shouted till the roof seemed to shake with the thunder of acclaiming voices. He, too, felt his eyes dim, a curious lump in his throat. It was marvelous that a woman could play like this upon the heartstrings of hardened men.

Emily Royce did not answer the shouts which seemed almost to demand

her presence. A great actor, who for once in his life felt himself a nonentity, presented her excuses. Mrs. Royce was only just recovered from a serious illness. She had acted against her physician's advice. She was very deeply grateful to them for their magnificent summons, but she was not able to answer it. So the lights went out, and the people unwillingly departed. The hush of a wonderful enthusiasm seemed to hover still over the house like a live thing, compelling reverence, forbidding the interchange of all after-theatre inanities. The critic strode into the street, and walked straight to his club without saying a word.

Emily Royce sat in her room, trembling in every limb, very white and very miserable.

"It was cruel of her to come!" she murmured. "She must know!"

She did not hear the knock at the door. Swift footsteps crossed the floor,

a pair of arms were thrown around her neck. The child was there on her knees.

"I have never thanked you," the child cried. "I never could. I have brought—somebody else."

A bronzed man held out his hands.

"It was my wretched temper, Emily," he declared. "You saved our child—God bless you! Won't you take pity on me?"

The duke stole out, and drew the young man after him.

"Here, Morton," he said, "Esther can spare you for a moment. Cut round to the Savoy, private room for five. Tell Joseph I give him *carte blanche*. I'll bring the family party along presently. Tell him I'll break his head if it isn't the best supper he's ever served."

The duke listened anxiously at the door for a moment. Then he drew a sigh of relief, and lighted a cigarette.

"It'll be all right," he declared, softly.



PRIMROSES

THE angel gave the traveler choice of ways—
He chose the flowered path as easiest;
Singing, he trod it all the Summer days,
And in the Autumn turned aside to rest.

"Nay," said the angel, "you must fare ahead."

"But I am tired of roadside weed and rose.
See, I will rest 'neath yon hedge garlanded."

"There is no rest upon the way you chose."

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



A DEFINITION

"DIPLOMACY, Lester," said the henpecked man, replying to the inquiry of his small son, during, it may not be necessary to explain, the temporary absence of the majestic wife of the one and mother of the other, "diplomacy is what makes a man carve a turkey and unselfishly deal out to his family and the visitors their favorite helps, including the only portions which he himself really likes, and at the same time look like a putty saint."

SOUVENIRS

I AM so fond of souvenirs!
 I get as many as I can.
 They're nice to keep in after years—
 A souvenir for every man.
 The boatswain's whistle? Yes, it's queer—
 Will Clymer carried it, at the Pier.

This clump of moss? If you had seen
 The breezy space whereon it grew!
 All sky and air and Summer green,
 And on the rock just room for two.
 We had the sweetest time when he,
 Dear Arthur, dug it out for me!

My poet-lover, Raymond, stripped
 This piece of bark, and wrote the rhyme;
 It always brings to mind the script
 That Rosalind found, once on a time,
 Pinned on a tree—it is as sweet,
 But, luckily—much more discreet!

Yes, ferns seem really fairy things;
 They make one think of sprites and elves.
 I brought these back from Sharon Springs—
 We went to find them by ourselves,
 Through a big wood—the wildest place!—
 I, and my cousin, Charley Chase.

Now, *these* are treasures—these two shells!
 We named them by each other's name,
 And that, of course, the story tells.
 Strange—but, they're always much the same,
 Those stories! See! "Sylvester," "May."
 He'll hate me till his dying day!

Oh!—that? That's nothing, dear, at all!
 At least—it *was* a boutonnière.
 We waltzed, and some one—let it fall—
 Some one, who—oh, *he* didn't care.
 I cared, that time . . . And—so, my dear,
 No name goes with this souvenir!

MADLINE BRIDGES.



MEN sow wild oats—women husband them.

THE LAST OF THE DECADENTS

By Ralph Strode and Louis Marlow

“YES, the race is dying out,” said the Psychologist. “We are to be startled no longer. Years ago, the esthete, whirling the ebony cane of improbability with a fastidiousness that was all too natural, brought new life to us. The new philosophy shows us glimpses of a strange, unknown world—where art transcended nature, where men were not ashamed of themselves, where sense was subordinate to sensation. It must have been very wonderful. You remember how we used to look with eager, expectant eyes for each new phantasm. Ah! there was something to live for then!” His gray eyes glistened. “But now,” he resumed, looking coldly round at the other members, “what is there? The esthete gradually succumbed to the powers that were. He sank into an unnatural death. It was sad, my friends, sad.”

The Psychologist sighed.

“Have a drink,” said the Scotchman, unfeelingly. He had a genius for anticlimax.

“Absinthe or whiskey?” inquired the Psychologist, absently.

The Scotchman rose from his chair, and rang the bell.

“I shall order whiskeys all round,” he said, in an unnecessarily loud voice. “Then you can continue your original dissertation.”

“I forget what it was,” said the Psychologist, weakly.

A servant entered the room.

“Ten whiskey-and-sodas!” shouted the Scotchman.

The face of the Actor-manager brightened. “I remember once—” he began.

“So do I!” interrupted the Scotchman. “Don’t let him talk,” he added, looking round.

“Go on, Tyrell,” said another member, to the Psychologist.

“Well,” said the latter, “I will continue. I believe I was talking about estheticism. There was a time, you know, when a decadent was as popular in society as an expert bridge-player is to-day. In the early nineties, a man was admitted into society if he wore an excessively green tie; now, as you are aware, he is admitted only if he is a good bridge-player, and bridge is so banal.”

“By Jove, though,” interposed the Very Young Man, “that reminds me. Last night, playing with old Dunstan and Lady Marzipan, Johnny and I brought off three—”

“Shut up!” said the Scotchman.

The Very Young Man sought refuge in his pipe. He was used to being snubbed by the Scotchman, and bore him no malice.

“To continue,” said the Psychologist, “about green ties and things of that sort. I remember, when it was fashionable to discover new geniuses, that my aunt, old Lady Lane, discovered young Aubrey Menster. He didn’t differ from the ordinary fools in any particular way, but he refused to talk about art. Of course, that was sufficient to mark him off as an eccentric at once. He said that he knew nothing about art, and refused to talk about art for art’s sake.”

“He was a very nice man,” said the Scotchman.

“Oh, you knew him?” the Very Young Man put in his word.

“Here are the drinks,” remarked

the Scotchman, who, not having known Menster, ignored the question.

"Menster was not a decadent, then?" inquired the Actor-manager.

"I hardly know," replied the Psychologist. "If he was, he disguised the fact well. His novels were so excessively immoral that his private life must have been extremely dull. However, poor fellow, he's gone now, and here we are without a single interesting person amongst us."

There was a pause; the Psychologist sipped his drink.

"Are you a decadent?" inquired the Very Young Man, abruptly.

"Alas! no," replied the Psychologist; and there was an atmosphere of tragedy about him. "I have a wife who is the essence of conventionality, a wife to whom the beautiful in nature could never appeal, a wife who would suffer agonies to keep up some ephemeral fashion; in short, gentlemen, a wife who knows nothing of love, who is illiterate, uninteresting, stout, unoriginal, plain; a wife who—" He was warming to his subject, when he was interrupted by the Actor-manager.

"On a point of personal explanation," said the latter, "I should like to point out that we are not both married to the same woman."

The Scotchman bellowed. "Poor fellows!" he said.

The Psychologist and the Actor-manager looked at each other sympathetically, sighed deeply, and continued to drink.

"No, there are no decadents left," said the Psychologist. "There are a few who would like to be decadent, but who are afraid of losing their popularity; and that is all. Decadence, my friends, like alchemy, is one of the dead arts."

"If I may put in a word," said an Oxford man, "I believe I can introduce the company to a real live decadent."

The others looked round eagerly. "Who is he?" cried several voices in unison.

"I knew him at Oxford. He took up his career a couple of years ago,

and lives in a green atmosphere. I have seen him drink absinthe."

"Quite the old school," said the Actor-manager.

"Oh, quite!" replied the Oxford man.

The Psychologist was inclined to be a disbeliever.

"It is not quite the same thing," he said, "to pose as a decadent, and to be a decadent. One may easily act the part; to live the part is much more difficult."

"Oh, I guarantee his genuineness," said the Oxford man.

"Well, we shall see. Tell us about him, his nature, his ideals, his manner of living."

"He is a man of moods," began the Oxford man, gently waving his hand about, "very comparable to an April day; a man who might be calm at day-break, racked by a sharp shower of emotional perturbation at noon, spiritually drunk in the afternoon, and something else in the evening."

"A rather lame description," said the Psychologist, severely.

"I'm sorry," said the Oxford man, "but you shall see him for yourselves. Come round to my rooms at eleven o'clock to-morrow, and we'll go and see him."

"Will he be up?" inquired the Actor-manager.

"Well, let's say three o'clock, instead; but a decadent is always up, provided there is no reason for his not remaining in bed."

"Never attempt to be epigrammatic," the Psychologist warned him; "it is so banal."

"Even in a decadent?" asked the Oxford man.

"That remains to be seen," replied the Psychologist.

II

At about a quarter-past three the next day, the men arrived at No. 18 B, Craven Mansions. The door was opened by a young footman, who was dressed in a gray livery with white

buttons. He was astonished to see the number of visitors. The Oxford man, feeling the responsibility that had been laid upon him, stepped forward, and, in a loud, assertive tone, demanded to know whether the Decadent was at home.

The footman, poor menial, blushed. He suggested in a frightened falsetto that his master might be annoyed to see so many visitors, but the Oxford man interrupted him.

"Where is he?" he asked.

"In the blue room, sir," said the footman.

"Come along; follow me, and remember to be intensely serious."

Brushing aside the footman, he walked along the passage, and knocked at a door that had been painted blue. The Decadent always had all his doors painted in different colors, in order not to confuse them. In answer to a conventional and somewhat disappointing "Come in," the Oxford man opened the door, walked a little way into a room paneled in marble, and discovered the Decadent occupied in making little pastry cakes.

"Are you fond of pastry cakes?" asked the latter, sweetly.

"No," said the Oxford man, abruptly. "Allow me to introduce my friends to you. They are all eager to meet you."

The Decadent wiped his long, white fingers on a blue-silk handkerchief, and then shook hands with the Oxford man. He was tall and clean-shaven, with brown eyes that were remarkable only for their smallness, and auburn hair that seemed to be leaning over his forehead in a negligent attitude. As he stood up and gazed at the visitors, his chest was not as full as it might have been, nor his back as straight as the Scotchman's, but he showed no signs of actual physical debility. He exhibited no surprise at seeing so many strangers in his rooms, and went through a formal introduction to each of them with an air of polite interest. He shook hands with becoming solemnity, and then sat down on a divan.

"We thought that you wouldn't

mind us coming to see you," the Psychologist started the conversation.

"Do you take a long time to see people?" inquired the Decadent.

"That depends upon the people," answered the Psychologist. He was becoming interested.

"Ah! I see. I hope that you have seen me enough." The Decadent spoke with extreme politeness. "I am going out now."

"Oh, stay in a bit, old chap!" cried the Oxford man. "Remember, we have come miles to see you."

"How beautiful of you! I must go out now."

"To see a man about a dog?" ventured the Very Young Man.

"No; to see a godmother about an umbrella," replied the Decadent, very seriously; and, to the intense astonishment of the ten men, who had sat down where they could, he walked out of the room. In a few minutes, the front door banged. The visitors remained as they were, gazing stupidly at one another in silence.

At last, the Scotchman spoke. "Well, I'm damned!" he said.

III

THE Decadent had never before so fully appreciated the uses of godmothers. "They will survive even the higher criticism," he reflected, "and will ever remain the most obdurate support of religious faith. Even faith itself they will survive, for men will continue to believe in godmothers long after they have ceased to believe in God." Whenever the Decadent was in need of a new umbrella, or wanted to get rid of unwelcome visitors, he went to see his godmother. In the present case, both the umbrella and the ridance were matters of necessity, which was why the Decadent felt more than usually grateful for his godmother's existence.

Really, the Oxford man's intrusion with his friends was a convincing proof of the disadvantages of a Uni-

versity education. Nearly all Oxonians were either dull, which was middle-class, or brilliant, which was boring. Besides, they invariably introduced one to friends of theirs, whom one had no desire whatever to meet—a habit which the Decadent considered the most insufferable of their many vices. He had met only one really interesting man in his Oxford days; and this man had committed suicide at the age of twenty-three. The Decadent wondered if he would ever be inclined to make away with himself.

Probably not, he thought, for the half-penny papers had done their best to make suicide impossible. To be made the subject of a paragraph with a vulgar heading in a penny paper would be unendurable to a man of his temperament. It would be a dreadful thing to share notoriety with politicians and popular bishops.

The godmother lived in Lancaster Gate, and a hansom-cab was taking the Decadent toward his destination. "I shall stay to tea," he reflected. "The tea will be too strong, of course, but that is nothing serious, and a solitary vice is permissible even in a godmother. We shall talk mildly about things that do not matter. Sandwiches will be eaten, and the footman who brings them in will, I fear, not look as though Aubrey Beardsley would have liked to draw him. Yes, my godmother has her faults, but she makes up for that by having no opinions."

He trembled on the verge of an epigram, but trembled unsuccessfully. A shade of dissatisfaction crossed his face. It would be so pleasant to be brilliant as he paid his fare, and a cabman seemed the very best of people to listen to epigrams. He would appreciate them so little, and the Decadent hated anything like appreciation from other people. It was so vulgar.

"I appreciate myself," he would say, wearily; "that is quite enough. Besides, I am the only person in the world who can do it properly. The

art of appreciation—" He stopped; the words sounded like the title of an essay in a new magazine—a very new magazine—a magazine that could live only a month, or, at most, two. There was something touching about that, especially about the second number.

"They generally do have a second number," he murmured, thoughtfully. "The second number should be seen and not read; that is, I suppose, why they publish it."

He fell again to thinking about essays. Once, three or four years ago, he had written one himself, and a reputable quarterly had accepted it. He tried to remember the subject, and, after some effort, recalled the gist of it. Some one had said in his hearing that love fulfilled acted on a man's art like a corrosive acid. It was the burning and unsatisfied soul alone that could find for itself beautiful expression. To content the lover was to ruin the artist.

He had thought over this theory, tried to discriminate between the truth and the falsehood of it, and it was out of such reflections that his essay had been evolved. It had been a good essay, but he felt rather ashamed of it now. How absurdly serious he had been! Well, he had grown wiser, and wrote nothing but fantastic fables and cynical absurdities, which were published, from time to time, in a slim green magazine called *The Iguanodon*. It was one of his theories that literature ought to be an expensive luxury, and he conscientiously wasted two hundred pounds a year or more over his productions. Four fables would be bound up to make a gorgeous volume in morocco or vellum, with hand-made paper so thick, and margins so wide, that the book looked as big as a fair-sized Bible, though hardly so respectable. For authors who covered their expenses, or, worse still, contrived to make a profit on their work, the Decadent had no respect whatever. He had a horror of commercialism in any form.

He fell to wondering why he had changed from what he had been when he wrote that essay to what he was now, and reflected that it would puzzle the scientists to account for his present phase, his present system of life. It was a manufacture; certainly, not an evolution. He had deliberately, consciously, turned aside from the natural to the unnatural, from the healthy to the morbid, from green fields and rustling trees to hot-houses and exotic plants. Not that he despised nature, or the poets of nature, as many other decadents had done, or pretended to have done before him. Decadence, to him, represented the obverse side of that intruse and buoyant cultus of the joys of nature, of the freedom and delight of open life which, for want of another name, might be described as Whitmanism. He had, on a sudden, made up his mind that his mission was to cultivate that obverse side. It had all been done as a matter of principle; and here he smiled, for protests against principles were nowadays continually in his mouth. Yes, it was a settled conviction that had led him to decadence—the conviction that nothing can be anything without a contrasting background—no virtue without vice, no beauty without ugliness, and no delight in nature without artificiality. “That ruin, without which what were chastity!” He remembered how that line of Shelley had influenced him. It is lines like that, he thought, which *donnent à penser*, which start a train of meditation that may alter a life or deeply influence the whole world.

So, it was principle and settled conviction that had led him to a decadence which professed to despise principles and convictions rather more, if possible, than it despised anything else.

“No. 203, did you say, sir?” inquired the cabman.

The Decadent admitted that he had, and alighted slowly and carefully from the cab. Then he paid a supererogatory fare, regretting once again that no epi-

gram would spring to his lips to relieve the banality of the inevitable monetary transaction. Really, he would have to keep a private hansom; it would be rather a nuisance and rather an expense, but certainly a great deal less commercial.

He was in subtly melancholy mood as he rang the bell at 203, Lancaster Gate.

IV

THE Decadent was mildly surprised to find visitors at his godmother's. Mrs. West Ridgeway, Miss West Ridgeway—their names fell on his ears. He bowed, and, sinking with a weary grace into the chair nearest his godmother, took occasion to look at the intruders. His first sensation was one of annoyance; they had certainly no right to be there. A visit to one's godmother should be conducted with a certain privacy; it was hardly an event at which any casual acquaintance should be allowed to assist. It was really very thoughtless, especially as the old lady could not possibly have known that he was coming to see her that afternoon.

Mrs. West Ridgeway had the prior claim to observation, and she seemed to the Decadent so normally uninteresting that he could hardly suppress a yawn—a middle-aged, colorless woman, with faded yellow hair. She was either most uninteresting, he reflected, or with an impossible taste in hair-dye. Certainly, it was not a wig; a woman like that could never manage a wig. Besides, he remembered now that she was a Broad Church bishop's wife, which put that idea out of court at once.

Then he looked at the girl, and suddenly a curious thing happened. For a few moments the Decadent forgot to analyze his own sensations. From the morbidly subjective, he passed to a comparatively healthy objectivity.

The girl was exceptionally attractive—so much was obvious to the most critical, and could hardly have been denied by even the youngest cynic.

She was probably not quite eighteen, and had not yet lost any of the grace and delicacy that lend to children their peculiar charm. But she was something more than a child; her life had passed from the early to the later dawn. The white air of earliest morning hours is quiet and neutral, sexless and exquisite, like the being of a child; but, later, the things of nature stir and tremble with delicious presage of the coming glory of the sun. That is the most wonderful time, the subtlest season of awakening desire.

It was this subtlety, this wonder that took hold by force of the soul of the Decadent and bore it away, whither he would not. In this young girl, with whom chance had brought him face to face, he felt an almost breathless consciousness of a presage, intense, yet half-expressed, of passionate womanhood to come. It was the presage of the later dawn, enriched with humanity, a personality, with which wide nature can never thrill. The unrealized is always more fascinating than the fulfilled; a promise carried out is a promise destroyed; to complete is to make hideous.

The Decadent's momentary objectivity had fallen from him like an ill-fitting cloak that had been thrown on a sudden over a man's shoulders, and the introspective dominated him once more.

He understood now why maturer women had never seemed marvelous, or even admirable, to him; their very maturity robbed them of all that made this younger girl so wonderful. The laden trees that swoon in the July heat can never know the delicate and wakening bloom of early May. Why, how perfect she was! He smiled at the crude enthusiasm of the phrase, and fell to making an inward laughing-stock of himself.

"Soon I shall become a minor poet," he thought, "and write a series of sonnets with tri-syllable endings to an overwhelming majority of the lines."

Surely, here was a theme to force men to artistic expression, a theme that might excuse even the effusions

of a minor poet, if that were possible. The dark hair, drawn over ears and forehead, and fastened loosely behind the head; the brown eyes that still glistened as wonderfully as a child's; the small, virgin mouth; the cheeks with their delicate, blended harmony of color—all were amazing, past power of words or music to express or praise aright. Lines came to mind uncalled for—"There is a garden in her face." Ah! those seventeenth-century poets knew how to worship their mistresses. And he thought of Shakespeare's marvelous sonnet in which the lover-poet chides the forward violet.

Certainly he was growing ridiculously romantic, but second thoughts brought wisdom. He would write nothing. He would live his poems, and only admire.

Then his normal self struggled for reassertion. A decadent falling in love with a school-girl! She was certain to be crude, and very likely admired Marie Corelli; he had heard that school-girls did things of that sort. He tried to believe that a tête-à-tête conversation with the girl would bore him immensely, but had to confess to himself that it would be worth while listening to anything which came from such lips as hers. Her voice, too—she had spoken a few sentences—was well modulated, and had an indefinable sweetness of tone. What did it matter, after all, what people said, so long as they knew how to say it?

"Wilfrid," said his godmother, changing abruptly whatever slender subject of conversation there might have been before, "I am going to give you an umbrella."

The Decadent detached himself with an effort.

"Thank you very much, godmother," he said, dutifully; "of course you are. That is why I came."

The old lady smiled serenely, for her godson was a privileged person, and was always expected to say eccentric things. Mrs. West Ridgeway looked almost scared, and a shade sillier than usual. Her mouth opened a little, but she prudently refrained

from speech. The girl seemed prettily puzzled for a minute, and then her eyes twinkled. Admirable eyes they were, and revealed a sense of humor, combined with a certain spirit of independence. It might be reasonably surmised that the Broad Church bishop, in spite of his wife, did not always have everything his own way.

The Decadent found it very difficult to talk that afternoon. It was ridiculously foolish of him, but he could do nothing but think of the girl. "I might almost be a healthy-minded undergraduate," he thought, and did his best to shudder.

After some desultory conversation, in which he had taken a more or less meaningless part, he began meditating the invention of a long-standing engagement, which made it impossible for him to stay to tea. He disliked not being at his best, especially before strangers, and was on the point of rising to take his leave, when he was anticipated by the bishop's wife. Hands were shaken, conventionalities murmured, the door shut on the visitors, and the Decadent found himself alone with his godmother.

The old lady found him unusually difficult. He sipped from his cup in silence, and ate an abnormal number of watercress sandwiches in an absent-minded way. She grew almost anxious about him.

"Are you thinking of standing for Parliament, Wilfrid?" she asked.

The Decadent started, uneasily. "Good heavens, no!" he said. "Whatever makes you think of such extraordinary things?"

The godmother apologized for the injustice of her suspicions, but observed that he seemed so very much unlike himself that afternoon that she was afraid there might be something wrong.

"I certainly feel horribly commonplace," he answered, rising, "and it would be inconsiderate of me to bore you any longer. Besides, it's time for

my absinthe, and where absinthe is concerned, unpunctuality is a crime."

"The umbrella will reach you by to-morrow evening's post, at latest," said the old lady, as she rang the bell. The consolation seemed a small one, but the Decadent smiled his thanks wanly, as he took his leave.

"I wonder if he's in love," reflected the godmother, after he had gone. "If so, I hope something will come of it. No man is really sane until he is properly married."

V

THE Oxford man called on the Psychologist some days later.

"It is very extraordinary," he said, "but the jury seemed inclined to look on the whole affair as a joke. I thought it was most wrong of them, considering what the poor fellow must have gone through. My aunt, Mrs. West Ridgeway, introduced me to his godmother—she's very much cut up over the business."

"I heard there was something about an umbrella," murmured the Psychologist.

"So there was, I believe," replied the Oxford man, "though that was only a side issue. Oh, did I give you a copy of his farewell letter? He had fifty privately printed on hand-made paper with roughened edges, just before the end. Of course, that explains everything. We don't know who the girl is, but she must have been very wonderful. I should like to meet her. Well, he's the last of the lot, and I am rather sorry he's gone."

"Perhaps he is, too," said the Psychologist; "but it all seems to have been done in a particularly graceful manner. By the way, did you see what the verdict was?"

"Yes," said the Oxford man; "suicide during temporary sanity."



THE WAY OF THE WORLD

THERE was a tinge of bluish color in the sky; there was a momentary softness of tone; Summer was on her way, and on a fleecy, velvet-colored cloud sat the fairy goddess who goes about seeking people in trouble, to deal out to them gifts from a big bag of cloth-of-gold.

To the garden of Daphne she wandered, and found a maiden just ready to go forth into the world.

"Where is your armor, my fair maid?"

The maid looked bewildered.

"Know that ye must not go forth into the world with empty hands? What would ye have? Where are your gifts?"

"I would have genius," said the maid, "and goodness, and a broad mind, and a loving heart, and great faith in humanity."

The fairy goddess emptied from her bag these gifts, and the maiden straightway went into life's busy turmoil.

Years after, the goddess found a maid with sad eyes and wan, on the dusty highway outside the mighty gates of Vanity Fair.

"Why do ye weep?"

"Alas! I am burdened with my gifts, and I cannot enter there." And, with tearful eyes, the maid looked at the high gates.

"Give me back those gifts I gave, and I will give ye those that will enable ye to walk by the sentinel." And the fairy godmother took back the genius, the goodness, the broad mind and the loving heart, and great faith in humanity; and poured gold and a heart of stone, eyes without tears, shoulders that could push and a mind fenced in by golf-sticks and ball-room cards, and over them all she poured more gold.

"Go," she said. And straightway the maid walked past the sentinel at the gate, and was welcomed by hundreds of laughing men and women.

ELEANOR WALTON.



BUNCOED

COBWIGGER—I thought I gave you money the other day to buy Christmas presents for your friends?

MRS. COBWIGGER—I know you did, my dear. But the things I bought are so lovely I've decided to keep them for myself.



THE keenest critic of him who can is he who can't.

A LOVER IN DAMASCUS

By Charles Hanson Towne

FAR, far across the desert sands,
I hear the camel-bells;
Merchants have come from alien lands,
With stuffs and gauds and silken bands,
Back where their old love dwells.

O my belovèd, far away
Are cities by the sea;
Yet should I go to far Cathay
For many a weary night and day,
My dreams were still of thee.

II

Through the old city's silence,
Where the Abana flows,
Oh, harken to the nightingale
Sing lyrics to the rose.

But through the dusk no answer
Is ever breathed or sung,
Though the bird's heart with pleading
The whole long night is wrung.

Yet well the lonely songster
Knows that the red rose hears.
. . . Ah, love, I need no answer,
But let me see your tears!

III

Belovèd, in your absence I have told
My love for you to every little flower,
Vermilion, pink and purple, red and gold,
That blossoms in our fragrant-hearted bower.

And should I die ere you come back again,
Would not the rose my golden vows repeat?
Yea, every bloom would whisper through the rain,
And fling its perfumed message at your feet!

THE SMART SET

IV

How many a lonely caravan sets out
On its long journey o'er the desert, Doubt,
Yet comes back home laden with ivory,
With gold and gums and scarfs from oversea.

So went my lonely heart forth on its quest;
Through torrid wastes and parchèd ways it pressed.
Empty and sad it left the city gate,
But came back with your precious love for freight!

V

If in the great bazaars
They sold the golden stars,
Belovèd, there should be
A necklace strung for thee
More wonderful than any known or dreamed of, love, by me.

If wealth could buy the mist
By Dawn's pale, pearl lips kissed,
Belovèd, there should be
A white veil wrought for thee
More marvelous than that faint film which hangs above the sea.

VI

Ah, when the dark on many a heart descends,
Our joy more swiftly runs;
Heart of my heart, our great love never ends,
Though set ten thousand suns!

Allah be with us when that last deep night
Shall wrap us round about;
And Love be with us with her steadfast light,
When Death our spark blows out!



AT IT AGAIN

MRS. NEEDHAM—It was so good of you to remember me at Christmas with that beautiful present.

MRS. MALAPROP—I knew you would like it, my dear, for you always get so little.



MAN blames the woman who fools him, instead of blaming the fool.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN

By Hayden Carruth

I 'VE always read stories quite some —both of us have, Eliza and me —and I suppose we always shall, they helping to pass away the evenings, and the rainy days when you can't work. I don't flatter myself that I could write a story—nor Eliza don't, either. Far from it, but I do think that I can pen a few lines just to tell how much comfort we find in stories, and how helpful they are, and especially how much truth is in a story sometimes. "Jabez Butterworth," says Eliza to me, "just write out how we found the Christmas stories come true in our case. If your spelling's a little shaky, the printer will fix it up."

Well, why not? You see, our boy, Hezekiah, he ran away from home, and went to the city about the time he was grown up and was coming to be able to begin to earn his keep—before time just about being worth his salt to us. But we missed Hezekiah, all the same, him being our only child, and we—Eliza and me—being some soft-hearted. It was lonesome without Hezekiah stomping round the house in his boots, and complaining about his mother's cooking at the table, and not getting up in the morning when I called. The house seemed very still, and our hearts yearned—as the story-writers say. But no word came back from Hezekiah, though we tried every way to get our thumb on him, such as advertising in the papers, as for instance, to whit: "HEZEKIAH: Come back and all will be forgiven. PA AND MA;" and, "HEZEKIAH: Your distracted parents await your return;" and, "HEZEY:

Come back. Can explain. Still true. Terrible mistake. It was not George. Thirty-third street, down-town side. Your KIAH;" which last notion we got from reading the other personals. But nothing fetched him. Our Hezekiah—Eliza's and mine—was gone. For seven years, we never saw him nor heard a word from him.

During all of this time, we never gave up hope entirely, though often it looked mighty dark, and sometimes we felt almost plumb beat. We went to a detective agency, and a man what Eliza thought might button his collar and put it on over his head was put on the case, which resulted in nothing but bills. We even tried a fortune-teller, a woman what Eliza reckoned could buckle her belt, and get into it either way, and she threw herself into a fifty-cent trance, and said he was beset by a dark enemy, and to beware of a certain blonde friend which we trusted, and that Hezekiah might be nearer than we thought. After which she came out of it, and said that her dollar fit was more comforting, which we took also, and she threw it, and said we was to play Ribsidies, both straight and place, and that we would find the chicken-coop gig a sure winner; and we, seeing that the lady had mistook the order, we left.

Well, there not seeming to be anything else to do, we just waited, I often saying to Eliza, "Eliza, these are weary years;" and Eliza saying to me, "Jabez, he'll come yet." And through it all we kept on reading a good deal, especially stories, and some

poetry, too, our favorite being, "What if my Heart Should Burst, Should Burst!"

After a while, we took to reading Christmas stories mostly, them seeming the most filling on account of the wanderer always returning on Christmas Eve. We had our own wanderer. Would *he* return on Christmas Eve? The years passed, and he didn't. And, some play-actors coming along, we went to hear them, though generally sot against such; and a fat man lifted himself up off the floor by his hair, and says he: "Tee-twenty years ago I drove her from me door—me-onlychee-ild!" And says I to Eliza, "Alas, must *we* wait twenty years?" "No, Jabez," says Eliza; "no. I feel that we shall have to wait but seven. This year he will return, Jabez." And, somehow, I began to feel the same myself. It was the Christmas stories which gave us hope, blessings on them! They fairly breathed hope and encouragement. How different from other stories, though good of their kind, perhaps!

It is Christmas Eve. Seven weary years have dragged away. Eliza and me are in our humble home, lacking but one thing—our wandering boy. (I mean to put the rest just like one of the Christmas stories, if I can fetch it.)

"We must put the lamp in the window," says Eliza, which she does noiselessly and almost reverently. "Its beams shall shine forth and light our darling boy on his way to home."

"Yes, yes," says I. "Then we must set here by the fire and wait, and talk softly, hardly daring to hope, yet hoping. For without hope, Eliza, our souls shrivel and our hearts become as ashes."

"Yea, even so, Jabez," says Eliza. "Fetch up a chair for him, here be-

twixt us, before the fire. The books *cannot* be wrong—no, they cannot, cannot! Our Hezekiah shall soon set here with us, and we shall talk over softly all that has happened in the long years."

And Eliza wipes away the fast-flowing tears, and my own eyes moisten; and chokingly I say: "Our only son, aye, our only son!" And for a long time we set in silence, save for the loud ticking of the clock, which seems to say, "He—is—com—ing; he—is—com—ing!" And the tea-kettle on the hob sets up a gentle sizzle: "Hezey—hezey—kiah! Hezey—hezey—kiah!" And so we set and set, our hearts full to overflowing.

Then, just as the first faint shadow of doubt finds lodgment in my bosom—but not in Eliza's—we hear scrunching in the snow outside. "Hezekiah's step!" whispers Eliza, in a strange, yearning tone which I had never heard before. "Ah, you cannot deceive a mother's ear!" Then comes a tap at the door. "Hezekiah's rap!" says I, forcing back the tears. "The books are right. The wanderer does return on Christmas Eve!"

Then I cross the room, and Eliza fetches the lamp, and I swing open the door, and—yes, ah, yes! there stands Hezekiah. And with him his wife and five children, considerably tow-headed, and three pug dorgs, and a canary-bird in a cage, and a parrot, and other critters miscellaneous. And they come in as if they owned the place, and have lived on us ever since, without doing a stroke of work, the return taking place five years ago, and there being now three more children, and dorgs uncertain, not having been able to count them for some time.

But the books, ah, the books—the books were, as I may say, vindicated.



MAN can distinguish between the real and the imitation in woman, but has an ingrained weakness for the imitation.

THE RESEMBLANCE IN RUPERT

By Guy Wetmore Carryl

FOR a full half-hour after the boy had left him, the man sat motionless, before the squat doorway of his cabin, staring out across the tidal river that now ran swiftly, in curious whirls and crinkling eddies, toward the gaunt timbers of the railway bridge, a mile away. Beyond, on the smooth, upward slope of turf, were two dots of red, direction flags on the golf links, and one of white, the tin number-plate at the third hole. The club-house, with its wide piazzas and second story of white stucco, and heavy, black beams, perched reflectively upon the summit of the slope, and stared back at him from vacuous, latticed windows, which noted as much of their surroundings as did the man's own clouded eyes.

The world was very still, with the vast, calm silence which comes with the fall of the wind at sunset on the coast of Maine. The river, gleaming in sinuous reaches through wide sweeps of mud-flat and rank marsh-grass, mimicked, mirror-like, the slow, majestic color changes of the sky, burning vivid yellow, glowing crimson, fading into saffron, paling to silver-gray. Far off, at the turn of the road beyond the drawbridge, the boy paused, looked back, and waved his hand. He had been gone fifteen minutes, striding sturdily along the highway which wound circuitously down-river, to the big, many-windowed hotel, three miles distant, on the bluff overlooking the sea. And, as if the simple gesture had been a shouted greeting, the man roused from his reverie, and signaled in reply. Then he was once more alone with his

thoughts and the pageant of departing day.

The man—he was called Jamison—was a mystery to Rock Harbor, and, as such, resented. He had come, none knew whence, offering and seeking no neighborly interest, and had taken up his abode in a long-deserted fisher's cabin at the first turn of the river. This he repaired and, to an extent, remodeled, with his own unaided hands. His dory snuggled at the nose of a tiny wharf, and, like those who were his fellows in name only, he went daily to sea. Beyond this simple fact, too usual to be indicative of individuality, the circumstances of his identity were as unfathomable as those of the gulls that went, wailing, up and down the river with the tide. His voice, except in the casual incident of needful purchase, none had heard, his hand none had touched, the interior of his cabin none had seen. So, for a dozen years and more—until the boy.

With the coming of the boy, a change, as silent and mysterious as the hushed turn of the tide, came over the life of Jamison. They met over a dory, stranded on the flat inside the harbor's mouth, and a bucket of soft clams, and were friends ere either knew the other's name; so that now Rupert came almost daily to the little cabin at the first turn of the river, or else sat, tense and eager-eyed, in the bow of the dory, as with long, forward strokes of the oars, the man propelled it silently to sea. And with intimacy came confidence, so that Rupert told his fisher-friend his dreams and his imaginings—those wonderful,

impossible dreams, those strange, sweet imaginings that are born and die with fifteen!—and Jamison, in his turn, took to his heart the boy whom he loved because he was a boy, and pure, and irrational, and, above all, frank of the affection which a man thinks it shame to show. At the great hotel on the bluff there was a slender, beautiful mother, who loved the boy as much, and knew him as little, as only a mother can. There were other boys, too, in plenty, who filled the hotel piazzas with joyous clamor, ran, swam, walked and golfed together, and welcomed eagerly as much of companionship as he was willing to grant. And there were picnics, when a steam launch towed a long string of dark red and green canoes and their laughing, singing freight up the river to the Pines or the Birches; and clam-bakes, by moonlight, with tinketty-tank-tank of banjos, and the rich, nutty savors of steaming vegetables and shell-fish; and straw-rides, hilarious with joltings and the choruses of college songs; and hops, with mazes of filmy frocks and white flannels, and the crowding faces of servants at the windows of the hall. But to these, Rupert preferred the slap of blue water on the dancing dory's bow, the lessons in the tricks of wind and tide, the heave and lunge of cod and haddock at the end of the dripping, shortening drop-line, and, most of all, the long talks, the enchanting stories, before the doorway of Jamison's cabin, when the afternoons drew on to sunset and the fawn-colored flats crept up, gleaming, from under the water, or sank sullenly out of sight beneath the pressure of its eager advance.

Inside, the cabin suggested only remotely the calling of its occupant. Save for the oilskins hanging limply in a corner, the rubber boots, with their thigh coverings turned down and showing the lining of buff cloth, and, on a little table, a half-dozen tholepins symmetrically whittled, Jamison's home might have been a hundred miles inland, instead of nestling, as it were, in the crook of one of ocean's arms.

What else there was of furnishings and fittings would have proved strangely incongruous to another observer, but other observer there was none, and to Rupert's young eyes their anomaly was unapparent. From the tiny mantel-shelf, a cast of the Unknown Woman looked down upon the hearth; in a far corner, another, the Apollo Belvedere, stood out, cream-white, against a dark background of embroidered altar-cloth; on a low bookshelf, a half-hundred volumes in dull levant stood shoulder to shoulder, like soldiers, and the gilt words upon their backs were names to conjure visions with—Omar, Verlaine, Baudelaire, Cervantes, Goethe, Tasso, Kipling, Spencer, Pater. On the walls were pictures, mostly photographs, in sober, black frames—the Stadium, the Acropolis, the course at Epsom, the yachts at Meulan, and a score of others, curiously contrasting, but, among them all, no face of man or woman or child. A corner cabinet of dull mahogany held its store of treasures behind bright, diamonded panes—little madonnas of ivory, box-wood and porcelain, quaint bits of Thun pottery, ikons of enameled brass, beer-mugs of Bavarian crystal, Danish glug-bottles, Brazilian knives in silver sheaths, pewter, swizzle-sticks, and Swedish boxes of carved and colored wood. To all these and to their stories, Rupert was duly introduced. Only of one, and this the greatest treasure of them all, was he never made aware.

This, as the glowing river gloomed by degrees to gray, the man at the cabin door remembered, sought, and brought out into the deepening twilight. It lay in the palm of his broad hand, looking up into the eyes that had vouchsafed it no more than a glance before seeking once more the misty distances, where the last glow of sunset lay snared within the nets of firs and silver birches—the exquisitely miniaturized face of a boy, with clear, frank eyes under a parted ripple of ruddy bronze, a thin, straight nose, and a sensitive mouth that was half a

droop and half a smile. But wherein lay the picture's compellant charm was not its finished grace of workmanship, nor yet the singular beauty of the face portrayed, nor even the subtle suggestion of force and nobility and the love of life which lay in the eyes and on the proud, young lips, but a haunting, dual resemblance—a resemblance, vaguely elusive, to the man who held the miniature in his palm, a resemblance, positive and eloquent, to the boy who, but a moment since, had waved his hand from the turning of the road. And this was the treasure which Rupert had never seen.

Over the wide, still landscape, the fingers of darkness moved slowly, caressingly, smoothing the sharp angles, blurring the contrasts, closing carefully the eyes of dying daylight, and composing earth and water for the blue-black shroud to come. The ebbing river moved more slowly now, as if with the spent light its eddying strength were spent, and, out of the eastern haze, the oval moon, long since risen, swelled, covertly, into the fullness of her saffron splendor. The night wind, relieving its exhausted comrade of the day, shouldered in landward in short, brisk rushes, carrying in its arms the scent of seaweed and the sea. A gray heron, dipping until his feet stirred a long, straight dimple on the slackened river, dawdled lazily up-stream.

The man at the cabin door straightened himself slowly, straining the little miniature in his hand, as if he would crush it utterly. His eyes looked over and beyond all the suggestion of the silver silences about him, yet the invisible world in which his reverie strode, with bent head and folded hands, was gray and silver, too, and appealingly eloquent with the same haunting hints of what had been and was to be no more. And who shall say what figures companioned him, what voices rang in his ears, what hours, framed apart from their fellows by the magic touch of most perfect comradeship, clearest understand-

ing, failure or success, slid slowly past his seeing, wraith-like, reproachful, one by one, and score by score? The Past came close to him, sought her reflection in his eyes, and learned therein that her name was Pain!

Of a sudden, the impatient night, abandoning the carefulness of its former wooing, strained the world in its arms. Animation, even the negative silver that had been, seemed to die at its touch. The light went out in the sky and upon the river; the distant trees melted, as suddenly as snowflakes on water, into their background of ether. The earth, yielding utterly, lay back, dropped her dusky lashes, sighed, and slept. For a lingering instant hung upon the air a faint, far blur of sound—the languid monition to invisible ships of the bell-buoy at Handcuff Reef, five miles at sea.

As abruptly as if he had been smitten, the rigidity of the man's posture gave and broke, and he bent low over the picture of what he had been, holding it close, close to his eyes, and then touching it, over and over, with lips that piteously trembled. A great sob—than which, in a man, God makes no thing more awful—wrenched him with a pang as of deathly sickness, and he cried aloud to the world of silences and shadows:

"Christ in Heaven!—for another chance!"

The jaundiced dawn, like a sick man fingering the curtains of his bed, fumbled and fretted with the shroud of fog that lay, torpid and unyielding, over Handcuff Reef and the angry swells of surrounding sea. The merciless passion of the preceding afternoon and night was gone, but, in its stead, ran a long, purposeful succession of hungry breakers that clutched and gnawed at the reef, undismayed by the fruitless assaults of the centuries, and bent upon its ultimate subjugation. The boy stirred on Jamison's right arm, and, at this given opportunity, he changed his position, with his left drew Rupert closer against his breast, and eased the numbed member

by long, slow stretches, and crimpings of his tired fingers.

It was, then, no dream, no nightmare, as he had come to half-believe it, during the cold, numbing vigil of the past ten hours; but a reality, stern, inevitable, which it was for him to face and dominate. In the inadequate light of new day it all came back to him—the pounding of the dory against the wave-heads roused by the freshening wind, then, out of an unintelligible haze to eastward, the sudden, awful lunge of the gale that had tossed the little boat like a smitten cork, torn the sheet from his hand, and the halyards from their rings, rent the sail in shreds, and driven them, ere a man could breathe, full upon the hungry jaws of Handcuff Reef. Finally, the desperate scramble through the swirling froth of breakers, with the boy's body close-clasped to his; the last, despairing grind of the dory against the rock, before it shuddered, staggered, and fell back, riven, to be seen no more; the first miraculous firmness, barnacle-roughened, beneath his feet; the dumb, instinctive attainment of a point which the cold wind smote, but which the water could not touch; the slow, unfeeling succession of the long hours just passed, from twilight to the approach of dawn, when, upon the flat summit of Handcuff, the weight of Rupert lay heavy upon his breast, and the peril of Rupert yet heavier upon his heart.

As the boy's movement eased him, and he stretched his fingers, the heavy lids of his eyes lifted, and the gray beneath cleared and looked out, with a sort of courage, upon the laborious advent of the day. Another movement of the boy, and Jamison bent his head, until he could see the whiteness of the other's face, the clinch of his lips, the rigid furrow between his eyes that told of suffering so keen as to stab through slumber. Then Rupert awoke with a shuddering sigh.

"My arm," he said, as their eyes met.

"I'm afraid it's broken, boy. That was a cruel wrench it had when we

were fighting to get a footing. You've been so brave! Don't cave in now, old chap. The worst of it's over. It's morning, you see—a poor morning enough, but still, morning. And we're going to pull through, no fear."

He was glad that the boy did not question an optimism so little based on certainty. Rupert slept again, almost immediately, nestling in the strong arm which held him. And as, striving to support him more securely, Jamison propped himself against the rock with his right hand, his fingers closed upon an oval and smooth something, and he took it up and looked at it for many minutes, turning it idly over and over. Then his eyes brightened suddenly like kindling coals, and he threw back his head, and looked straight away into the fog. He was holding a soda bottle of light blue glass, so thick that it had come unbroken through the gantlet of the breakers which had flung it upon the reef. It was empty, but the cork was still there, half-way driven into the mouth, a whim of the hand that had cast it into the sea. And, whereas, an instant before, death had stood, leering at them, a pace away, now the white angel of salvation stepped from the encircling fog-bank, laid hand upon the grim spectre's shoulder, and drew it, compellingly, aside.

Jamison's breath came sharp and eagerly as he laid his plans. Beyond the sullen blanket which surrounded them, five miles away, there were watchers on the shore. He had seen their bonfires winking, earlier in the evening, before the fog came in. And the sea, which had run so furiously, was moderating. Even now, a dory could ride it in safety, could it but know what goal to seek. The swim was long, but in the old days, at Naragansett, at Seal Harbor, at New London—what was it they had said of his swimming? The thought shouldered its way from among others of the past, clad in gayer garb than these, its fellows. So there *was* something worth remembering, after all! The man's lips parted in a smile.

"*Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit*," he said, in a whisper. "*Forsan? In veritate!*"

But the breakers—the crowding breakers that fought and foamed against the cliffs at the entrance to Rock Harbor! There lay the peril, there the potential failure! But the man still smiled, and raised the bottle in his hand, until the light struck through it, oddly blue.

"Two are better than one," he said, in the same half-voice. "If not I, then you, my little brother castaway. God speed!"

Carefully disengaging his left arm, he drew from an inner pocket a notebook, a pencil and a length of stoutish fish-line, and, tearing out a leaf, began to write.

The bottle, with its message securely stowed within, was slung about his neck before the boy moved again. Jamison bent, and took him once more in his arms.

"Your arm," he asked; "does it hurt much, boy?"

"Yes," answered Rupert, "I'm afraid it does. Perhaps, if you could tell me a story—like those up at the cabin——"

"Once upon a time," said the man, simply, "there was a chap who was very fortunate. He had money, and good looks, and he could do—have done—almost anything. He was a bully good athlete, all round. You know what I mean. He took a dozen firsts in the Interscholastic, and more in college, stroked his crew, and made a sixty-yard touch-down at a Thanksgiving game. Then, he could play—the piano, you know—and sing all kinds of things, and do the banjo, and, oh, I don't know what all besides. Fellows liked him. He made Psi U., and—er—Bones at Yale—do you understand?"

"Yes," said Rupert. "A corker—wasn't he?"

"Yes, until he began to go wrong. He was married, and there was a baby, a little boy. But this chap I'm telling you about didn't know how lucky he was, and he came to be dissipated

—got drunk, you know—and—and there were worse things, too—never mind what—so that, at last, his wife left him, taking the baby, so he mightn't know his father, who was bad, bad, bad; but might grow up far away from him, and have a chance to be what his father might have been and wasn't—a clean and honorable man."

"What was his name?" asked the boy.

"The father's? His name—his name was Rupert."

"Mine!"

"Yes, the same as yours; except that you must take more care of yours, boy—keep it more pure, more honorable, more respected. Listen hard, now, and tell me, if you don't understand. It is a wonderful thing to be a boy, a wonderful, beautiful thing. We're good friends, aren't we, boy—the very best?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Good! That's it. We love each other, don't we, and we're the very best of friends? Well, then, here's what I want you to do, here's what I want you to *be*. Be straight—and be a gentleman. The two things ought to go together, but somehow they don't, nowadays, not always. Don't be afraid to tell the truth, no matter how it hurts, no matter what trouble you're afraid it will get you into. Do everything that's manly—ride, swim, run, be strong, and stick up for your friends. Look out for things you don't want to talk about in daylight, and in the open air, with other fellows, the best fellows you know. That's being clean, and, oh, boy, *be clean!* There are lots of things that fellows think it's big to say and do—you'll find out later—that are really very small, very much to be despised. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said Rupert, "yes, I think so."

"Good! I want you to be big—really big. I want you to see and do all the things that are done by the fellows you admire. I'd like to have you stroke your crew at college, and

make a star touch-down, like—like the other Rupert in the story. I'd like to see you make Psi U. and Bones. But, after all, those are not the most important things. The best thing is to be clean, and the next best to be straight, but you can't be one without the other. And so much is waiting for you! It's a wonderful thing to be a boy!"

He half-closed his eyes, and went on, more slowly, and in a lower tone, speaking, as it were, more to himself than to the boy beside him.

"So much is waiting for you! The getting to be one of the oldest fellows in the school, with all the little chaps looking up to you; the first of college, and the new faces, with the new friends behind them; the training table; the track; the big games, and the dancing on the field afterward; the look in a chap's eyes when he learns to love you and trust you; the nights of a pipe, and a fox terrier scrambling all over you, and a chum's arm linked in yours, and four lads singing something about pretty somebody or other, off there among the trees; the late afternoons at Gales Ferry; the crowd at the Pequot, after it's all over; the big, clean *being a man*—"

"What happened to him?" broke in the boy.

"To——?"

"To Rupert, after he did wrong. Did he die?"

"Yes. There was no more Rupert, after that. He changed his name, and went away, far away, forever. He'd had his chance, you see, and he'd failed. A chap doesn't have two chances. Yes—he died."

"And God punished him," said Rupert, with conviction.

"And God punished him. But—you know what they do when a fellow gets knocked up at football?"

"Put in a sub—what?"

"That's it! They put in a 'sub.' Well, Rupert put in a sub. It was his son, the baby I told you of, who never saw his father—to know him—because he was taken away by his mother when he was so young. But he grew

up, and was handsomer than Rupert had been, and did everything better, and *kept straight!* So, when God came to judge Rupert, the son, who was a man then, stepped in between, and spoke for him."

"And God forgave him?"

"Ah, boy, that I don't know—but I think so. Yes, I think God forgave him. Do you understand what I want you to do? Not only to start straight—most of us do that—but to *keep* straight, boy, and not—not——"

"Not to be rotten—like the other Rupert."

There was an instant's silence.

"Not to be rotten," said the man, firmly, "like the other Rupert. That's it, exactly. Do you think you could sleep now, boy?"

"I think so, yes."

As his eyes closed, the man bent over, and kissed him on the lips.

Long after, as he fought his way through the last, chilling surges, he questioned whether what he had said had been enough, sufficiently eloquent, whether the boy had understood. Then he spoke, the sharp, salt slap of the water against his lips well-nigh smothering the words that came.

"But, then, I never spoke to Haggerty at all . . . and there was a quarter of an hour to play. . . . But it wasn't my place to speak . . . the captain saw to that . . . and Haggerty . . . Haggerty . . . just went in . . . and . . . and made good! . . . But it's easier making half-backs than men . . . and there's no such thing as a second chance. . . . And yet . . . the old law . . . it has never been done away with . . . 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth' . . . and . . . and . . . why not? . . . a gentleman for a gentleman! . . . When the backs go stale, put in the subs . . . and the captain . . . the captain will show 'em what to do! . . ."

A little pause, as the long, slow side-stroke, grown more and more

laborious, went on and on. Then, a gasping prayer, as strange a one as a man could proffer:

"*Captain Christ!* Be merciful to the 'sub'!"

The five long miles were done. Out of the fog leaped, suddenly, the boulder-bordered beach of Rock Harbor, lashed by the insatiable sea. The mad-dog breakers, foaming in a chaos of thrashing spume, snapped and snarled at the rocks that beat them back, and, over them, the sun, a ball of dull saffron, grinned through the pall of yellow morning.

For a moment the man fought his way, desperately, despairingly, toward the goal of his endeavor. Then, a larger sea took him at its crest, and whirled him on high, as the boy whirls the top he is about to spin . . .

On the sand of the beach, near by, lay the bottle, uncorked and empty, and from hand to hand of the watchers, weary with their long vigil, went the paper it had contained. Toward the hotel on the bluff above four moved painfully up the narrow path, carrying in their arms the man who had brought the message.

They were met at the summit by a great throng, which made way to let them pass, for the story had mounted the bluff before them. But as they reached Rupert's mother, she blocked their way.

"Where are you taking him?" she asked, with one slender hand upraised.

At the sound of her voice Jamison slowly opened his eyes, and for a long, wonderful space they looked, each into the other's, without a word. Then she came close to him, bent down, and, very softly, spoke his name.

"*Rupert!*"

Suffering had sealed his lips, but upon them hovered a faint smile, more tender, more eloquent than speech, and, at the signal, she laid her hand on his.

"My dearest!" she whispered. "My dearest—my dearest!"

An instant her eyes left his, seeking instinctively the dot, far out beyond the breakers, which was the Rock Harbor life crew, swinging at their oars toward Handcuff Reef, five miles at sea.

But it was not the "sub" alone to whom the Captain had been merciful.



A PSEUDO ROMANCE

A TUNEFUL melody he played
Beneath her window-seat,
And when he stopped his serenade
A paper grazed his feet.

No, it was not a *billet-doux*,
Nor lover-like reminder,
But just a dime the baby threw
To pay the organ-grinder.

McLANDBURGH WILSON.



HIS BELIEF

"COLONEL, what is your opinion of total abstinence?"
"Why, I believe it is a good thing, suh—between drinks."

IN CAMELOT

IN many-towered Camelot, when all the Spring was green,
 The little maid who loved him watched King Arthur and the Queen,
 In the glooming of a May day what time the vespers rang;
 And soft beneath their balcony a bird-voiced minstrel sang
 An idle song of truant love with notes like tears between—
 In many-towered Camelot, when all the Spring was green.

The King hath closed her hands in his, and kissed her finger-tips,
 But ever turns her gaze to where the distant highway dips;
 The King hath plucked a blood-red rose, and twined it in her hair.
 Oh, little maid who loves him best, small right have you to care
 Or know the Queen hath anxious eyes above her smiling lips.

Below them, in the courtyard, rings a sudden shout and din;
 The King hath smiled and gone his way to bid the feast begin.
 Oh, little maid who loves him best, what joy is yours to see
 The rose fall from the Queen's loose locks upon the balcony,
 What time she laughs and leans and looks where Launcelot rides in!

In many-towered Camelot Love plays his ancient jest—
 This night above the Queen's still brow the pearls of Launcelot rest;
 But the red rose that the King had plucked and twined within her hair,
 The red rose that he held and gave, I trow it showed not there,
 Not in a Queen's black hair it died, but on a maid's white breast—
 In many-towered Camelot Love played his ancient jest.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE

MADGE—Miss Passay has volunteered to get up a booth at the Christmas Bazaar and sell kisses. Isn't it awful!

MARJORIE—Dreadful, my dear! I never thought that girl had the face to do it.



MEN are all alike in differing about women.

PIAZZA PARLEYS

By Charles Battell Loomis

SCENE—*Hotel piazza in White Mountains. The Presidential range in the distance entirely unnoticed by stout, elderly woman, overdressed and overfed, who is sitting with her back to the view, engaged in knitting. To her enters short, erect, military-looking man of about fifty. He is accounted a good raconteur when he is let alone. He is waiting for Fudge Adams, who has promised to measure merit in golf. Thinks to pass his time by good-humoredly telling MRS. STEBBINS, whom he has sized up, a little society anecdote.*

COLONEL ISHAM

Good afternoon, Mrs. Stebbins. Regular White Mountain day, isn't it? Makes me feel like a colt.

MRS. STEBBINS

Well, for my part, I never feel like doing anything when I come up here but just sitting still. You know, we lead a rather gay life in the Winter.

COLONEL ISHAM

One would guess it. I see the Mode-Banns came last night.

MRS. STEBBINS

Yes; I went down to the station to meet them. I was here last Summer, you know, when they came, and I saw quite a little of them.

COLONEL ISHAM

That was a funny thing that happened to Frederick Gore Mode-Bann in New York last Winter, wasn't it?

MRS. STEBBINS

These aren't the Frederick Gore Mode-Banns; they're the Apthorp Welles Mode-Banns.

COLONEL ISHAM

Yes, I know, but this happened to his brother. He was on his way to the opera-house to talk through a few acts of "Tristan"—

MRS. STEBBINS

I never could see much music in "Tristan," could you?

COLONEL ISHAM

I never tried to. Music is not for me. I prefer to talk without an accompaniment. But, as I was saying, Frederick Gore—

MRS. STEBBINS

Do you know whether they are related to the Gores of Philadelphia?

COLONEL ISHAM

I really can't say, but he was just alighting from his runabout—

MRS. STEBBINS

How popular those electric runabouts have become! I understand David Radnor Mode-Bann is coming up from the Notch in one.

COLONEL ISHAM

So? Well, our friend had barely stepped to the pavement when a plain-clothes man—

MRS. STEBBINS

There, now, I'm glad you said that! What is a plain-clothes man? I know what an old-clothes man is, but I never did understand what the other could be. Is it a drummer for a clothing-house?

COLONEL ISHAM

No, no—a special policeman not in uniform. Just wait a minute, and I'll tell you what happened to Frederick Gore.

MRS. STEBBINS

Do; I'm dying to hear. Such gentlemanly people as the Mode-Banns are! You know, they've been leaders of society for several generations. They have such a high-bred air.

COLONEL ISHAM

Very true. Well, the plain-clothes man tapped the aristocratic Frederick on the shoulder, and said, "You're wanted at headquarters." Of course, Frederick was astonished, and, seeing William Vanastor alighting—

MRS. STEBBINS (*excitedly*)

Did you say William Vanastor?

COLONEL ISHAM (*patiently*)

Yes.

MRS. STEBBINS

Isn't he the young man who went to the Philippines? I told Mr. Stebbins that I was proud of our aristocracy when I heard he'd gone to the Philippines. So many young men of the *middle* classes stayed at home, but he, born to the purple, as you might say, went. He's written a book, too, hasn't he?

COLONEL ISHAM (*with resignation*)

I believe he has.

MRS. STEBBINS

That's the American of it—patriotic and literary, and yet perfect aristocrats.

COLONEL ISHAM

Yes, for four or five generations perfect aristocrats, as you say. Not many old-world families can go back as far as that.

MRS. STEBBINS

No, indeed! Do go on, Mr. Isham. I'm so interested in what you are telling me.

COLONEL ISHAM

Why, he hailed Vanastor very nonchalantly, and said, "Decided not to hear 'Tristan' to-night. Have an appointment with my friend at headquarters."

MRS. STEBBINS

What did he mean by that?—the army?

COLONEL ISHAM

No, police headquarters.

MRS. STEBBINS

Oh, yes, of course! That's where they have the rogues' gallery. I've always teased Mr. Stebbins to take me down there to see photographs of the criminals. It's something so foreign to anything I've ever been used to that I know I'd be interested.

COLONEL ISHAM

Very likely. You *do* take an interest in things.

MRS. STEBBINS

Why, yes! why not? I'm sure I'm not blasé, although, since Mr. Stebbins retired, we've seen pretty much everything and everybody, and been almost everywhere.

COLONEL ISHAM

You don't need to tell me that.

MRS. STEBBINS

No, I suppose it shows. Mr. Isham, you're a *very* tantalizing story-teller. You leave your hero in an exciting predicament, and then you begin to flatter me.

COLONEL ISHAM

Flattery is sometimes impossible. (*Bowing.*) Why, there's not much more to tell. As soon as Vanastor recognized the detective, he said, "Well, Fred, what have you been doing now? Shoving the queer?"

MRS. STEBBINS

Shoveling what?

COLONEL ISHAM

Shoving the queer—passing counterfeit money.

MRS. STEBBINS

Oh, *what* an expression! I'm perfectly innocent about such things.

COLONEL ISHAM

And the detective, of course, recognized the Vanastor features.

MRS. STEBBINS

Yes; isn't it remarkable how much they all look like old Peter? I have a picture of him in our drawing-room. I have such a respect for the man. He must have had a great deal of character. I tell Mr. Stebbins that he would have made a splendid founder of a family of remarkable men, but, unfortunately, we've never had any children.

COLONEL ISHAM (*inclining his head sympathetically*)

Well, the detective saw he'd made a mistake, and he apologized and left. Here comes Judge Adams. I promised to go over the course with him. He says he's a duffer, but mock modesty is a characteristic of golf. (*Exit, bowing, rather hastily.*)

MRS. STEBBINS (*solus*)

Well, that was a long rigmarole about nothing at all. And folks say Mr. Isham is such a good storyteller. (*Yawns. Looks at her watch, and, seeing it is the time for nourishment, waddles rapidly to the dining-room.*)



THE LONELY ROOM

LOVE, how I miss you in this little room!
 Day were not darker by the sun unblest.
 The bird has flown and left an empty nest
 Where all is silence and unbroken gloom.
 It is a garden whence the light of bloom
 Is faded out; a bower, the loneliest,
 Bereft of beauty and the happy guest
 Whose voice was music, and whose breath, perfume.

Delay not, Sweet; absence already long
 Burdens my heart with such a grievous pain
 Hourly it seems that it must yield or break.
 Belovèd, hasten back and bring the song,
 The sunlight, blossoms, and the old refrain
 Of ecstasy—heart-ease to end heart-ache!

JULIAN DURAND.



HOW DID HE KNOW?

CLOSSUN—I want to look at some rings for a Christmas present.

CLERK—Yes, sir. About what price, sir?

CLOSSUN—The cheaper the better.

CLERK—And is there any stone your wife prefers, sir?

Dec. 1903

THE SEA-KING'S DAUGHTER

TO the oozy beds where they love wallowing
 She led the way, great sea-beasts following
 Her, their herd, the sea-king's daughter.
 "Sweet beasts, listen, I go wandering;
 Dreams have come which have set me pondering,
 (The while I couched in the deep-sea flowers
 And the moon made strange this world of ours)
 Dreams of the world above the water.

"Browse and grow fat in the brown weed meadows,
 Drowse and grow fat in the rippling shadows,
 While I fare forth, I know not whither,
 For an unknown joy to bring it hither,
 From the other world above the water."
 Long lay the flocks with their slow eyes lifted,
 Up to the rocks where the wrack-fronds drifted;
 Through the green brightness
 They see the whiteness,
 Again, of their herd, the sea-king's daughter.

Soft, white feet by the sharp shells mangled,
 Floating hair all torn and tangled,
 Sobbed she, "I come from the world above ye,
 Say, sweet beasts, do ye know me and love me?
 Would I had stayed in the heart of the water."
 Monstrous, grisly,
 Tusked and bristly,
 They come creeping,
 At sound of her weeping,
 Crawling, creeping, with moaning and whining,
 Piteous love in their jewel eyes shining,
 All for the grief of the sea-king's daughter.

AMY SAWYER.



A MAN AND HIS WIFE

CRABSHAW—You say you wish your Christmas present to be a surprise, and yet you state exactly what you want me to get you. Now, how can that be a surprise?

MRS. CRABSHAW—It will be, my dear, if I get it.

WHAT THE UNDER WORLD THINKS OF THE SMART SET

By Josiah Flynt

"All I want is fifty million dollars,
A champagne fountain sprinkling at my
feet,
Pierpont Morgan waiting on the table,
And Sousa's band a-playing while I eat."

RETURNING from the Southern Catskills recently, I was delayed for a couple of hours in the neighborhood of Rondout, and I could think of nothing better to do than to renew my acquaintance with an old tramp camp, which, years ago, used to be one of my homes in this district. On exploring the bushes along the river, I found that the camp had disappeared, or apparently so, and I was about to make my way back to the town, when, not far from where the camp had stood in my day, I heard a voice singing the words printed above. The song was not new to me, but there was a plaintive earnestness in the intonation which made me pause; it was as if the singer had carefully thought out his claims on life, and was stating them as frankly and convincingly as he knew how. I followed the sound of the voice, and pretty soon reached a tramp camp which had taken the place of the one that had disappeared. Rumor hints that a negro saw a ghost, one night, at the old camp, and it was decided best to leave the spectre in sole possession.

At the new camp, a solitary tramp was sitting on a railway tie, watching the boiling of some eggs, and accompanying the sizzling of the water with the song. He did not notice me for several minutes, and I was free to make unobtrusive observations.

He was obviously a roadster—his

rusty clothes and battered hat were sufficient evidence of this fact, had there been no other signs by which to judge. But the way he sang, together with a refined look in his face, made it very hard to determine whether he was a "professional" or only a "gay-cat." I went up to the fire and greeted the man.

"You're a merry sort of chap," I remarked. "You don't want much, do you?"

The stranger smiled, appreciatively. He seemed glad to find that some one realized, as he did, how much he needed.

"I'm a Smart Setter," he proceeded, in a moment, removing carefully the tomato-can with the eggs from the fire. "While you're wanting anything, I believe in wanting a lot. Have an egg?"

"Then you get your fun out of life just dreaming and singing about what you want?" I queried, accepting one of the eggs, which had doubtless been filched from some farmer's hen-house.

"That's about it, I guess, so far as getting what I'd like is concerned," the man returned, "but I'm by nature a Smart Setter. Because I can't have the fifty million and the rest, I loaf this way. If you think it over, the two ends of society are very much alike. The real Smart Setters do what they want to in their way, and my kind do the same."

"You're quite a philosopher," I hastened to say.

"No, I'm not a philosopher," he protested; "if I were, I'd go and be a robber. I'm a dilettante—that's right, ain't it?" And he looked up inquiringly from the tie.

I replied that the word, as he used it, puzzled me.

"Why, I mean that I'm a butterfly," he pursued. "I jump from one thing to another, as the fancy takes me. That's my end of society's way of being a Smart Setter."

"How do you understand that the other end of society manages?" I asked.

"How do they manage?" the roadster—for such he plainly was, in spite of his language—repeated. "They manage on their fifty million, champagne fountains, and the other things."

"Would you trade places with them?"

"Just now I would," he admitted, eagerly, "but I don't know how I'd be to-morrow. As I said, I'm a dilettante."

This little episode occurs to me on trying to set down some of the things which tramps and the like have said to me about that "stratum" of our society called "The Smart Set." The Under World—*i. e.*, the vagabond, the thief and the ne'er-do-well—thinks and talks of this "set" about as much as do other people. It is, perhaps, doubtful whether anybody talks about it as much as the "society columns" would seem to make out; but everybody carries it along in his memory as a possible subject of conversation, and the Under World denizens find it very convenient for "chewing-the-rag" purposes, when business is slack.

II

SPEAKING roughly—if this be permissible in connection with the Smart Set—it is fair to say that the Under World has about as undefined notions concerning what this exclusive circle is composed of, and what it stands for, as has the next man, woman or child one may happen to meet in the street. To the majority of persons, it is probably more of a myth than a living, automobiling, champagne-splashing reality. I am sure that I do not know accurately where it

begins or ends, or what it does in the meantime. Some of the tramps and thieves whom I have run across in my travels, however, are cock-sure that they know all that is to be known on the subject—from *their* point of view. On a great many subjects, their point of view is valueless; but since the "sociologists" classify them as one pole of human society and the Smart Set as the other, it seems worth while to hear what the under pole has to deliver concerning the upper.

The tramp is perhaps the most garrulous talker, when the Smart Set is up for discussion. The reason may be that he feels that he is at the bottom, even in his own world, and consequently the best fitted to express an opinion of a class which is popularly supposed to be at the top of all worlds. Whether this be correct or not, it is a fact that he improves a great many opportunities to unburden himself on the subject.

A man, by the name of "Louisiana Barcas," once gave me an explanation of the origin of the Smart Set, which is more or less typical of the ideas of his cronies in this matter. We were sitting on a bench in Madison Square at the time, watching what "Barcas" called the "swells" parade past us. I had dropped a remark on the power of wealth, and had tentatively suggested that money was what kept the Smart Set vertebrate. Barcas did not agree with me.

"It may 'a' been money that corralled them together first," he declared, "and o' course it's money that keeps 'em going, but it ain't money that makes 'em a bunch. It's fiercer joys—I call 'em all fiercer-joy people. You an' me don't know what fiercer joys is; we ain't got through with the tame ones yet. Those folks that you see out there—the Smart Setters, as they call 'emselves, they're all through with our kind o' fun. You an' me can enjoy a hand-out yet—we're simple; the fiercer-joy people 'ud throw a fit eatin' hand-outs. That's how they got together. First there was only a few that threw fits, then

it got to be fashionable, and those that had the dough and could afford it, joined the few."

"But how do you account for their exclusiveness?" I asked Barcas. "Only a comparatively small number are alleged to be in the ring."

"Easy enough. There's not many in this country that's got money enough to know what fiercer joys is. Those that had enough decided that it 'ud be swell to sit pat and look wise. They had the game all their own way, see?"

I was not at all sure that I "saw," but Barcas did, and that is the main thing just now. There are a great many tramps very much like him. They do not rant and scold like socialists; they analyze the situation simply and calmly, and are happy in the conceit that they know what's what. Of course, there are also those who scold and talk anarchistically, but their conversation consists mainly of cheap, stock phrases taken from the lectures and books of violent agitators; it is generally very flat.

The most amusing part of the tramps' notions of the Smart Set concerns how the latter pass the time away. In a vague way they have all heard of the luxurious entertainments in "the Avenue" and at Newport, and they build on this hearsay the most exaggerated conceptions of what takes place.

I was once "on the road" at the time a great deal of space was being given in the newspapers to a very fashionable and exclusive dance; it had been quite the "event of the season," apparently. A roadster, called "Slim," and I picked up a newspaper, one morning, containing an elaborate account of the function, and I must needs read the story to "Slim," which I did in my best manner. He listened patiently to the detailed description of the costumes, and I was about to begin on the appointments of the salon, when he interrupted me.

"Chop," he exclaimed, "chop! Run ahead till you get to what they did. That's what I want."

I skipped a number of paragraphs,

and finally came to what "Slim" called the "feed" part of the affair. He lay back in the grass with an ecstatic look on his face. I read off to him in French the names of the different dishes and wines that had been served. "Slim's" face became blanker and blanker the farther I read. His patience finally gave out, and he exclaimed:

"What the devil did they eat?"

I had to explain as best I could what the French terms stood for.

"Slim's" eyes glistened, and he smacked his lips. "How full they must 'a' got!" he remarked, and looked dreamily up to the sky, as if mindful of times when he had been "full" himself. Presently, he said: "It may be a lot of fun being a Smart Setter, but give me straight English set-downs for mine. If I'd been at that dinner I'd got bughouse just tryin' to make out what I was eatin'."

What the tramp admires in the Smart Set, as he conceives it, is its determination to do just what "it — pleases." He cannot comprehend why the "swell" selects the diversions, companions, and menus that he does, nor does he always envy him his fine houses; but, at heart, he thoroughly sympathizes with the men and women at the top, who go ahead and have a good time, spending freely money which he assumes they did not have to work for. On cold Winter nights, when his stomach is empty and no shelter can be found, he is not unlikely to curse the man at the top — when things go roughly with the tramp he gives himself up incontinently to abuse of everybody; but, year in and year out, taking the good times and the bad and striking an average, the genuine "blowed-in-the-glass" hobo is inclined to look upon his fellowman in the Smart Set as a brother in the art of having a good time. The hobo has mastered this art at the bottom of the social ladder; he thinks, speaks and acts on lines quite as clannish and exclusive as does the man, whom he calls his *confrère*, at the top of the ladder. An influential hobo can start a fad,

say such as eating with his toes, in Hoboland, almost as easily as can a leader in the Smart Set introduce a new custom. He is as much of a personage among his own people as is any "swell" in his environment. For this reason, he feels like saying to the "swell": "Brother, amuse thyself. I heartily sympathize with your independence."

III

THE thief, considered socially in the Under World, is a "climber." Apparently, on account of his superior dress and manner, he is a higher order of being than the tramp. Actually, however, the tramp is the greater aristocrat of the two—he does exactly as he pleases; the thief, on the other hand, is continually having to think about his appearance and manners. The thief's estimate of the Smart Set is very much affected by this cramped condition in which he finds himself. He may be likened to the "climbers" in respectable life; he is always on the *qui vive*, keeps strict watch of the latest fashions, and is eager for opportunities to creep into luxurious surroundings. In his own immediate surroundings, he is rated an aristocrat; in the world at large, he becomes a "middle-class" representative, with possibilities of rise or fall, as luck and his own abilities or weaknesses may decide.

As a general thing, he envies the people who live in the Smart Set, and his opinion of them is tempered by this trait in his character. He often has money enough in his pocket to live for a while on quite as "swell" a scale as does the "Smart Setter," and the fact that his profession and *gauche* manners bar him from the latter's society galls him. I refer, of course, to the ambitious thief with a "good front"—fashionable clothes and willingness to spend cash. There are a great many cheap pickpockets, and the like, who never bother their heads about swell-dom; they are content if they can

steal enough to be presentable in their own class; but these pilferers are not worth considering in connection with the subject in hand. It is the man who steals thousands, and spends them freely, who has ideas to express about the people who live at the top.

Near Forty-second street and Broadway, in New York, is a lounge of men who call themselves "smart" thieves. Some of them are mistaken in their valuation of themselves, but this does not matter; the lounge is the main thing. Men gather here from all parts of the United States; they represent all kinds of outlawry, and they have all kinds of money and luxury. When off duty, they congregate at the lounge, and watch Vanity Fair trip gaily before them. From time to time, members of the Smart Set drift into the neighborhood, and then the "smart" thieves rearrange their neckties, straighten their hats, untwist their legs—and "rubber." Pretty actresses and fashionably dressed stenographers receive merely such honor as the rearrangement of neckties or hats involves; the "Smart Setter," if he or she be recognized, gets the benefit of a complete set of changes. The object of this ceremonious conduct once out of earshot, however, the wagging tongues are let loose with a bound. Perhaps the passer-by was a well-known clubman.

"Did you see the socks he had on?" one of the thieves will exclaim. "I thought only women wore them."

"Them Smart Setters are all alike, women and men," another will explain. "A lot of 'em could change clothes without your noticin' the difference."

A lengthy conference on "Smart Setters" in general follows, and the lounge becomes the scene of a heated discussion about socks, waistcoats, scarfs and hats. Throughout it all, if you listen carefully, you will notice an undertone of jealousy and envy. No such sense of humor pervades the assembly as would be the case were the men tramps; they criticize and com-

ment as seriously as if they were discussing a criminal enterprise.

Every now and then a few of them get so much money that they can hardly spend it fast enough; it fairly bulges out of their pockets. On such occasions the "Smart Set" dream takes a fast hold of them.

Not so very long ago four of the loungers were in Cincinnati, their pockets were stuffed with bank-notes, and they were dressed in the height of fashion. It was evening, and the "Smart Set" dream had begun to work.

"Let's go gamble," said one of the quartette. The others agreed. They lost until they became tired, and then some one said: "Let's drink champagne." Again they agreed, and Cincinnati was invited to join in the carousal. Toward morning, when the champagne had inflated the imaginations of the revelers, one of the four got up on a box "across the Rhine," and shouted: "I'm a swell, a New York Smart Setter. Look at me!"

Seven o'clock in the morning found the quartette in a rowboat on the river, their money all gone, and their faces very white. The man who had said that he was a "swell," hummed the song beginning:

"One day eating bread and honey,

Next day looking 'round for money," etc., and then proceeded to wash his socks in the muddy Ohio. The "Smart Set" dream flew away in disgust, and the four had to go to "Plantsville" to replenish their funds. The last heard of them they were back at the lounge, commenting on Vanity Fair again.

As has been indicated, the bulk of the comments are bitter or sarcastic. The thief knows perfectly that he can never hope to be a "Smart Setter" in the real sense of the word, and the inevitability of his position piques him, especially when he happens to have the wherewithal to make a momentary "swell" showing. It is impossible for him, so long as he has the ambitions of his class, to enjoy the delightful indifference which is the striking quality in the tramp's temperament.

An old "tomato-can" tramp once expressed the philosophy of his class thus: "What do I care? I've struck bottom. There's no place for me to fall to, and I couldn't climb if I would. So what's the use of worrying?"

The thief cannot comprehend this view of life; he is always waiting for the "grand stake," which is to make him independent, rich and a "swell." He is not certain that the Smart Set enjoys life, in its essence, any more than he does, but money and luxury constitute his horizon in such matters, and he allows himself to imagine that life must be very attractive in fashionable circles. He knows very little more than the tramp about what "Smart Setters" do, although he has better opportunities for making observations and guesses. The probability is that he would revolt in a week after a trial of Smart Set conditions; he would sigh for his lounge on Broadway, where he can say whatever pops into his head without considering the effect. Meanwhile, however, he stands there, "rubbers," looks enviously at the "swells" as they pass by, and, like my quondam friend, the tramp, declares that all he wants is "fifty million dollars."

IV

Has the Under World a Smart Set of its own? Yes, and no. There are members of it—both men and women—who are looked up to, respected, and envied by others who are not so talented or successful, and these constitute what, for want of a better name, may be called the general aristocracy. Then, again, different sets of men have private little aristocracies in their own immediate environments. The most expert tramps, for instance, naturally take first place in all hang-out gatherings and conclaves; the same is true in the thief's world. There is not, however, any "set" which can in any way be said to correspond even faintly with what is called the Smart Set in the larger world. Dress, fine manners, eccentric entertainments, exclusiveness

and aggressive independence may all be found in the Under World, but they have not yet been considered of sufficient importance to label them—Smart Set attributes. When a man “puts on airs,” so to speak, in Under World society, he is called a “Willy Boy” or a “Lulu,” and this name ends him for all time—he is henceforth one to be shunned. “Airs,” as observed among real Smart Set devotees, however, are at par, if not above it, among the majority of Under World people. As I have said, the tramp would not like to have to take a course in them, and it is to be doubted whether the thief would enjoy a long one; but both, in their different ways, find something attractive in the “swells” that pass up and down in front of their lounging-places.

As the years go on, it is not unthinkable that the Under World may evolve an exclusive set of its own. It is becoming more and more heavily populated, and there are those who are rising to opulence and distinction on the backs of the strugglers beneath them. Years ago, the nucleus of a very exclusive set gathered at a home in Clinton street to enjoy the dinners of “Mother” Mandelbaum. A number of the men who frequented her sumptuous dinners are to-day wealthy and shining lights in the highest circles of Under World existence; they also have a certain kind of standing among business men. It would be interesting to see what manner of Smart Set they might be able to form and hold together.



ARDEN

THERE is a wood wherein the thrushes fling
 Their very hearts away in melody;
 Where dryads have a home in every tree,
 And wood-gods haunt the shadow, murmuring
 Fantastic lures; where tawny lilies swing
 Their fragrant bells, and bees hum drowsily;
 And breezes woo the pale anemone
 With tenderness that breathes the soul of Spring.

Here Summer may not pass, nor Autumn rest
 His blighting hand, nor harsh winds wend their way;
 Beneath these boughs the wonder of the May
 Shall never fade, nor Love deny his guest
 Of happiness, nor beauty lose its truth;
 For Arden's forest is immortal youth!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



VIRTUE and vice are the same in the first two letters. It is what comes after that makes the difference. One may flatter himself that he is well started on the one, before he discovers that he is near the middle of the other.

THE VIGIL OF A WRECK

By A. Russell

WHEN consciousness returned to him, Hammersley sat up and looked around. He saw black cliffs, black sky, an adamantine sea, between whose surges rolled and vanished the yellow disk of a setting sun; a glow of gold behind the barred clouds of the west; a few yards of weed-strewn, sandy plateau, and a bundle of motionless clothing. He began mechanically to work his numbed limbs; the first use he made of them was to crawl to the side of the heap of clothing, and scrutinize it. He saw a man's face, white and bloodstained, but delicate of feature; a man's slender figure and a thin hand which clasped, with a grip like the grip of death, a small, square, gold locket.

"It's you, is it?" said Lawrence Hammersley to the deaf ears. "I hope you're dead, damn you!"

Nevertheless, since it was inexperienced that the man should die if it were in Hammersley's power to save him, he began to chafe the icy limbs and to promote respiration according to precedent. The sea was manifestly abating; the waves, which had not washed over the beach since that last Titan billow had yielded up its prey, were not likely to revisit their abandoned haunts. Hammersley took the seemingly lifeless body in his arms, and dragged it to a place wet only by the foam and partially sheltered from the onrush of the wind; and here, in a little while, Charteris opened his brown eyes upon Lawrence Hammersley's face.

"Lawrence!" he said, faintly, and turned away his head. "Lucy, where are you?"

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Hammersley drew back with a stifled exclamation. "Lucy isn't along this way," he said, with a grim laugh. "On that you may bet."

"Lawrence! It is you! What—what's it all about?"

"You fool, can't you see? The *City of Indra* has smashed up, and you're on some God-forsaken isle in the middle of the Pacific—just you and I together, in a solitude à deux. Understand?"

"Then where are all the others? Where's the ship?"

"In Davy Jones's locker. There's the wreck." Hammersley pointed it out in a gap between crossing seas.

"All drowned? Good heavens, how frightful!" Charteris raised himself with an effort into a sitting posture, and looked down with puzzled eyes at the little gold locket. Then, what little blood the rocks had left in his body rose slowly to his face.

"It's you!" he said. "Merciful heaven, it's you!"

"Yes, it's me. You didn't know I was on the *City of Indra*, did you? What are you staring at that photograph for? I suppose it's a photograph, isn't it—Lucy's, by chance?"

Charteris touched the spring of the locket, and looked down with dazed eyes at the face of a fair-haired girl, with saintly eyes and a mobile, sensitive mouth. "Yes, it's Lucy," he said. "My darling!" He lifted it to his lips, and in an instant Hammersley had wrenched it from his hand and flung it into the sea.

"That's my wife," he said, his voice thick with anger. "You let my wife

alone, if you please, or I swear I'll knock your brains out."

"Lawrence, for pity's sake—oh, Lawrence, you don't know what you've done! It's all I had left."

"All you had left? What have you done with Lucy?"

"Didn't you know? She's dead."

Hammersley got up abruptly, and walked away; the beach was too narrow for his pacing feet. Darkness was falling fast. He and Charteris were alone upon that tiny and desolate isle, beaten by the surges of a ceaseless surf. Charteris lay still, and watched him; he had suffered too much to be capable of a single movement of energy. He was a man of great constitutional delicacy, and had fought all his life against the restrictions imposed by prudence. In his present utter prostration his body was paying the penalty of a reckless, imperious will which his friends called pluck and his doctors folly. At length, Hammersley returned to his side and stood over him, an incarnation of cold and savage justice.

"Get up!" he said, brutally. Charteris, exhausted as he was, pulled himself to his feet and swayed against a rock. "Come this way," said Hammersley, and strode on against the dead weight of the wind, his head down, his bare feet gripping the stones. Of the beaten and struggling figure behind him he took no heed. At the end of the beach he stopped, and waited till Charteris staggered to his side.

"Now, get in there," said Hammersley, pointing to a narrow crevasse paved with splinters, which wound inward between walls of solid rock.

"Lawrence, I can't. My feet are cut to rags. I'd faint if I tried to, old man."

"My name's Hammersley. Put your arms around my neck."

Charteris obeyed, and Hammersley, half-carrying and half-dragging him, stumbled along between the rock-walls till they issued in a triangle of deep-drifted sand, shut round by the

impenetrable granite which leaned together overhead and sheltered them from wind and spray. "Now, lie down," he said.

Charteris dropped limply. "I say, what on earth are you taking off your clothes for?" he asked. "It's as cold as the North Pole, and it's going to get colder. You'll kill yourself."

Hammersley's clothes were tolerably dry by now. He wrapped them about Charteris with a roughness that made the act an insult. "I expect you'd die if I didn't," he said, savagely. "It's lucky for you I hadn't time to throw them off in the water."

"I'd rather die than take your things."

"Well, you've simply got to take my things; that's the square truth. You've taken a good many other things of mine in your time, you know."

Charteris was silent.

Later, when it grew very cold and dark, he got it into his head that he was alone, and that there was no one on the island but the dead. In this faith he spoke aloud: "Lucy!" and then again, "Lawrence, Lawrence!"

A voice, reassuringly human in its savage irony, answered him in wakeful tones, "What's the matter now, you delirious little rat?"

"Oh, I didn't know you were there. I'm sorry."

"Did you think I'd walked into the sea? What's the matter with you? Are you cold?"

"Rather, but I'm all right. I didn't mean to worry."

Hammersley groped for the voice in the blackness, and Charteris's shivering form was gathered up into a strong, warm grip. "Get to sleep, can't you?" Hammersley said, drawing down the benumbed face upon his breast. "You lisping fool, why can't you speak the truth and say you're freezing?"

Charteris fell asleep after a while. When he awoke, gray dawn was moving in the narrow strip of cloud overhead. Lying in Hammersley's arms, and wrapped in Hammersley's rough tweed suit, he was almost warm; but

Hammersley's lips were blue, and his head sunken. Charteris started up, and the movement awoke the sleeper.

"Ha! dawn, I see!" he said, sitting up. "Are you better?"

"Thanks to you; but I can't thank you."

"I guess you'd better not try. Thanks don't come very well from you, you know. You needn't think, because we're here alone together, that I'm going to forgive you. I knew you were on the *Indra*, and I kept out of your way for fear I should be tempted to kill you. I'd do it now if you weren't such a scrubby little mongrel." He got up, and stretched his cramped limbs. The dim light revealed his immense proportions and his massive physique. "I'm going for a walk now. Ta-ta!"

He stepped out on the desolate sand. The sea was still running high, but the air was fresh, and the wind had fallen. The sky was full of gray clouds, behind which the sun was breaking in yellow light. A part of the wreck still hung impaled upon the fangs of the reef. Hammersley climbed up the cliffs till he reached the highest point of the island. Volcanic it seemed to be, from its height and build; in size it was perhaps about three miles round; no living thing moved upon it save the gulls, and the wind and the white thunder of surf beat upon its shore. Hammersley stood for a minute, sweeping the gray horizon with eyes as keen as a Sioux's; then he descended again to the plateau, springing from rock to rock as if he had been, not barefoot, but shod with iron.

Charteris lay still and watched the clouds brighten overhead and kindle to gold, and the rocky opening fill itself with reflected light. Hammersley was away a long time. By-and-bye he came back, carrying an armful of tins and cases tied up in an oilskin jacket, and wearing an ordinary seaman's dress much too small for him, but drenched to the skin.

"You've been off to the wreck?" Charteris exclaimed.

"Polly put the kettle on, we'll all

have tea," Hammersley retorted, with an unmoved face. "I've been to the wreck. Here's some brandy for you—if you aren't a teetotaler."

Charteris coughed over the strong spirit. He admired and envied Hammersley's unshaken strength, but lacked the capacity either to emulate or to resist it. The food which Hammersley had brought, consisting chiefly of biscuit and tinned meat, restored the color to his cheeks and revived his failing vigor. Through the weary hours of sunlight he lay still and rested, while Hammersley made a score of journeys to and from the wreck. When night fell, Hammersley came without a word, and tucked a couple of blankets around him, and took him in his arms again. Emboldened by some gentleness of touch which he hoped to find the index of a corresponding gentleness of temper, he asked a question which had haunted him all day:

"Lawrence, do you think there's any chance of our being picked up?"

"Of course. We're in the track of all the ocean-going ships. The storm didn't drive us far out of our way. I've taken our bearings roughly. I wish you'd shut up."

Charteris was silenced for the moment, but ere long he spoke again. "Lawrence," he said, softly.

"My name's Hammersley. I wish you'd make out to remember that."

"Oh, let me speak! I must. You don't know how we—she—longed to see you and try to explain. It was her last prayer."

"She's dead. You said so." Hammersley shut his lips.

She wanted you to forgive her. It wasn't her fault, it was mine. I tempted her. You were so blind, you never saw."

"Wasn't likely to see. Didn't expect my wife to bolt with my friend."

"Don't! She never meant to do it. It was my fault, all along. I simply tricked her into it. I made her miss the last train."

"What's that?"

"I put the clock back half an hour;

and then, when we got to the station and found the train gone, I told her it wouldn't be any good going back the next day. Now do you understand?"

Hammersley laughed. "I wonder why I don't kill you?" he said. "I'd like to break in your ribs, and that's a fact. I could, you know." He tightened his grip till it was agony, but Charteris set his teeth and did not moan. "Well, you've got some pluck, anyway. But, Lord! what a miserable cad!"

"I don't know how I came to do it. I'd lived pretty straight before; but it was all done in a minute, in a whirl, as if I were mad. When she died I'd have killed myself, only it didn't seem to meet the case. You see, I wanted to die."

"When you die, you'll go to hell. I dare say she will, too; but I'm pretty certain she won't be with you, anyway. Oh, God! my little Lucy!" Charteris heard him sob as he went on: "What did she die of?"

"Of course, you don't know that, either. It was when——"

"What? No! You're lying for the fun of lying, aren't you?"

"No, Hammersley, no. It lived only an hour."

"Well, I do wonder what makes you tell me all this," said Hammersley, after a pause. "What are you doing it for, eh? Like seeing me wince?"

"I only wanted you to know exactly what sort of a brute I was—that it wasn't her fault."

"I knew that before, thanks all the same. I knew what she was before you came down to stay."

"She was just the same afterward. You don't hate her, do you?"

"No, I haven't enough of the commodity to spare from you. By Jove! I remember the days when I used to think you no end of a fine fellow. Do you remember Trinity, and the boat-race?"

"Rather. Barker was stroke and I was cox, and they wouldn't have you in the boat because of your weight, though you pulled a magnificent oar.

Jolly supper we had, though; Barker was such a good fellow."

"We did; you're right. By-the-bye, they kicked you out of the club, didn't they? I heard something about it's being Barker that put them up to it."

"Well, I deserved it, didn't I?"

"Certainly. Public morals have to be looked after. Besides, you did a dirty thing in such a peculiarly dirty way. Are you cold?"

"No."

"Then what are you shivering for? I wish you'd keep still."

"You're pretty much of a brute to me, aren't you, Hammersley?"

"Ha! Good! I thought you'd be whining for sympathy in five minutes. I could tolerate being shut up here with a blackguard, if you weren't such a puling fool as well."

Hammersley pulled off his oilskin coat, and wrapped it round the figure lying in his arms. Charteris tried to fling it off, but Hammersley swore at him, and held him down by force under the warm covering.

"I'd rather you'd thrash me to death, Hammersley, than do as you do."

"I'm not influenced by your preferences; that's unlucky for you, isn't it?"

"I was mad with love when I did it, and I've entreated you to forgive me; and we've been together for twenty years, and you've never known me to go wrong before."

"Hypocrite! what does that prove?"

"And I'm to lie like a dog and let you kick me? Well, I'm too weak to fight you; but you've no right to heap on me the insult of your protection."

"Yes, I've got the right, and, what's more, I'm going to do it; and you'll have to submit, though you abhor the touch of me." He gathered up the slender, cold hands, and held them in a warm grasp. "I've beaten you in everything else, and I'm beating you now. Mine's the Scriptural revenge, which is the most smarting revenge of all—coals of fire, live fire, to burn your soul with! Do

you hate me, and feel you've wronged me, and loathe the touch of my hand? Lie still, hound!" as Charteris tried to free himself; "I'm going to hold you, and warm you, and keep your sickly life in you. I like to feel you shrink from me, when I know you can't get away."

"Well, you hadn't any right to throw away Lucy's photograph. She gave it me when she was dying, and she kissed it."

Hammersley stirred; he lifted Charteris, and crushed him against his breast till Charteris's bones cracked. "Don't you call her Lucy," he said, letting him drop again. "She's my wife, anyway."

"But she loved me."

"Do you want me to kill you?"

"Rather," admitted Charteris, with a laugh; and they fell silent.

Next day, after an unusually long absence, Hammersley came back with a cut face, from which the blood streamed, unregarded, holding in his lacerated hands something which he flung at Charteris's feet.

"Just you catch hold of that," he said, "and don't let me see it again."

It was Lucy's portrait.

All day from the *Indra's* broken mast there waved a flag of distress, and when night came a fire of driftwood blazed upon the topmost peak of the isle, a sign to mariners. In the middle of the night Charteris woke up, and saw a strange beam of light, fan-shaped and brilliant, flitting among the clouds above his head. "Hammersley, what's that?" he said.

"Search-light," Hammersley explained, laconically. "I've just been

to see. You woke when I picked you up again. They've seen our fire, and are standing by to pick us up by daylight."

When morning dawned, they saw, not a league away, a big ship flying English colors. They had stayed to investigate the bonfire, and the vigil of the wreck was over.

"Lawrence," said Charteris, as they stood waiting for the boat to take them off, "Lawrence, you've saved my life, you've given me back *this*, you—you've been good to me, that was such a cad to you and—her."

"Well?" said Hammersley, nonchalantly, looking seaward.

"I couldn't ask it of any one else; but because you're you, couldn't you forgive me?"

Hammersley brought his eyes back to the handsome face, and Charteris flinched. "I consider you," said Hammersley, slowly, "about the most contemptible little beast I ever met. Mind, I never saw you till the wreck. If ever you speak an unnecessary word to me after we get into the boat, I'll kill you with my bare hands. See?"

"Yes, I see," said Charteris. "All right."

The sun was shining in a windless sky when they quitted the bright, lonely island, girdled by surf and alive with white, crying seagulls. Hammersley stood staring after it till it faded and became a gray blur on the pale horizon. Charteris watched him, and dared not speak to him. In his great, dark strength he stood like that fading barren rock, haunted by crying voices, and lonely forever.



SUCCESSFUL

"WHAT'S the matter with your finger, that you've got it in splints?"

"My oldest boy's ingenuity."

"How so?"

"He set a steel trap in his stocking to catch Santa Claus."

A SONG OF HARVEST

AS from his furrows Strephon came,
 A song of seed-time lilting,
 He met a maid for whose fair fame
 Gray monks might go a-tilting;
 It was, demure and diffident,
 No other than young Chloe
 Upon some pleasant errand bent,
 In snood and kirtle snowy.
 And as they passed, he brown and broad,
 She rosy, sweet and slender,
 A seed of love was sown—an awed
 But ardent glance and tender.

All Summer long flashed Strephon's hoe,
 The grilling heat unheeded.
 He saw the blossoms' fragrant snow
 By fruit of gold succeeded;
 Each field a topaz came to be,
 Its emerald hue departing;
 The orchards blushed right rosily
 To see the world sweet-hearting.
 And lo! by tears, as warm as bright,
 And Strephon's smiles well nourished,
 The seed he dropped that April night
 Took root, and bravely flourished.

The last field gleaned, the last grape pressed,
 And all the valley reveled,
 Save Strephon, who, far from the rest,
 Sat dreamy and disheveled.
 Then, one crisp morning, he awoke
 And, pulling through the shallows,
 For leaf-strewn, laughing miles, bespoke
 The parson for All-hallows.
 When, anxious hours of waiting past,
 And crossed Doubt's dark abysses,
 The patient lover won at last
 A harvest-home of kisses.

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



TOO LATE

“ADVICE to a newly married couple is so useless!”
 “Yes, all the harm is done then.”

A PRINCESS AT LARGE

By Mary L. Pendered

A STRANGE thrill vibrated through her as she clutched the brass rail of the omnibus staircase, and set her foot on the first step. It is not often that the metal rod of an omnibus gives one an electric shock; but, then, it is not often that one is a princess, or that omnibuses have the privilege of conveying royal personages. We must make every allowance for this particular vehicle. It had never before felt the hand of a real princess on its brass rail.

And the princess had never before been on the top of an omnibus. She was sixteen years old, yet this was an entirely new sensation, and it excited her immensely. She was somewhat surprised, but greatly relieved, to find that no one took the slightest notice of her as she staggered to a seat near the driver. Could it be possible? Was she really on the top of an omnibus? She gave vent to an irrepressible little laugh of delight, which made the navvy who was smoking a clay pipe on the seat opposite stare at her in dull amazement.

Yes, she was on an omnibus; there was no doubt about it. The horses started, and the driver asked another driver, in passing, whether he'd taken a ten years' lease of the road, and why he didn't sell his buttonhole to get his blooming hair cut. This, however, did not entirely reach the princess's understanding. She had not mastered either the accent or the idiom of the driver's language.

It was very exhilarating, very delightful. There was a spice of danger about the drive that enchanted her adventurous spirit, for the great, clumsy

vehicle swayed round corners in a perilous way, and the horses looked a mile off down below. The princess held her breath once or twice, when there seemed a possibility of being hurled through a shop window; but this only added to her pleasurable excitement.

The day had come at last. How she had longed for it, schemed for it! To be free, to do exactly as she wished, to do the things done by those happy mortals who have no Court etiquette to observe, no Royal precedents to follow—this had appeared to her, ever since she began to think for herself, the most desirable of all ambitions. From an inclination to a desire, from a desire to a longing, from a longing to a consuming fire, and thence to a fixed resolve is but a natural sequence. The princess wanted a day off, and at last she had achieved it.

It had not been easy to obtain. She had been obliged to take a certain maid into her confidence, to bribe, cajole and plead. But she had finally prevailed. The Princess Ella was just now supposed to be suffering from an acute headache, which made it necessary for her to be left alone and rest the entire day. The maid was keeping every one from her door. And that is how a pretty little Royal lady came to be traversing London on the top of an omnibus.

As the unwieldy thing rolled on, the Princess Ella enjoyed herself more and more. Her eyes sparkled at the uncouth badinage of drivers and conductors, which she but partially understood, and her attention was kept well on the alert by all the motley

sights and sounds that were so new to her. It is true she had driven frequently in London before, but one sees so much more from the top of an omnibus than from a mere private carriage. The streets took on a distinctly different aspect to her enchanted gaze. They might have been streets in the "Arabian Nights."

But, alas! the heights of earthly bliss are slippery, and only too often we are brought down them with a crash. In the Princess Ella's case this truism was illustrated by the omnibus conductor. He stood at her elbow, and said: "Fare, please," three times before she heard him. The fourth time his voice was so sharp that it cut right through her happy dream, and sent her trembling back to earth.

She looked up at him with startled, uncomprehending eyes; eyes so blue and starry that they dazzled even the omnibus conductor. He was a person who saw a good many lovely eyes in the course of his day, but under the melting gaze of the princess he softened visibly, and said, in comparatively gentle accents:

"Where do you want to go to, miss?"

The poor little princess gasped; carnations began to blossom in her cheeks. Where did she want to go? For the life of her, she did not know. What an awful position! And why had she not thought of it before? Of course, the man wanted to be paid and to know where she was going. Where was she going? Where could she go? She had no idea, and a weight of dull despair fell upon her heart. She was only sixteen, and had never been out alone before. Poor little Royal Ella!

Then, like a voice from heaven, she heard some one speak behind her, winged words and deeply welcome.

"That's what we'll do when we get to Battersea Park."

The princess was quick-witted. She pounced on the suggestion with all the eagerness of a minor poet in search of a theme.

"Battersea Park," she said, promptly,

ly, and put her hand to the dainty purse that hung from her belt.

That *ought* to have hung from her belt! It was no longer there. The carnations bloomed still more brightly in her soft cheeks. What had happened? Could she have been robbed? Oh, the horror of it!

"I have lost my purse!" she cried, trying to spring up quickly, so that she was almost flung into the conductor's arms. "Oh, what shall I do? My purse is gone!"

He asked her many questions. Where had she got on? How much money had she had with her? Could she give him a card with her address on it? Her voice grew fainter with each answer, until, at last, the sound of tears in it made the kind-hearted conductor pause.

"Never mind. You'd better git down 'ere and go straight 'ome," he said, making way for her.

What a horrible end to her lovely adventure! But she was a princess, and a princess must not cry in public. So she set her lips firmly, and rose with as much dignity as the motion of the omnibus permitted. Her pretty eyes were full of unshed tears, so that she could scarcely see where to step, and she was swaying giddily, when the same voice that had inspired her before said, in a kind, though somewhat bashful tone:

"Won't you allow us to lend you some money?" and a silver coin was slipped into her hand.

The princess had never had a shilling given to her before, and the newness of the sensation almost took her breath away. But the friendly act had an instant and magical effect on her spirits. It dispelled the awful sense of God-forsaken loneliness, under which she had felt completely crushed a moment earlier, and restored her faith in an indulgent world.

"How good of you! How very, very good!" she said, several times over; and, without the least hesitation, accepted the loan gratefully.

She paid the conductor with glee. Only twopence—it was so funny that

she laughed. All this fuss about twopence, this enchanting drive for twopence! She turned, and thanked the girl behind once more.

"Don't mention it," the girl said, politely. She had a sweet, merry face, and was very neatly dressed. The princess was neatly dressed, too, but her attire was of that simplicity which is the result of the most finished art; whereas the other young woman's frock and hat were of the something-three-farthings order. She continued: "We could see you wanted to go to Battersea Park, and it would have been a shame to turn back on such a lovely day. I hope you will enjoy it as much as we mean to do."

The "we" included a young man who sat by her side, in a short coat and white straw hat. He, too, had a pleasant face, and the same merry look in his eyes.

"Are you out for the day together?" questioned Ella, and there was a wistful note in her voice; for at that moment she became suddenly aware of her own isolation. She realized, for the first time, how greatly her amusement might have been enhanced by companionship, and quite envied the couple behind her; they looked so pleased with each other.

"Yes," said the girl, "we have managed to get a day off together, for a wonder. It's not often we can, as Tom is in a warehouse, while I do type-writing in an office; and our respective chiefs never seem able to spare us both at the same time. But we've had a stroke of luck for once, and, what's more"—she hesitated a little—"a—friend of ours has got off, as well. He is to meet us in Battersea Park, and then we are going up the river by boat to Twickenham. That's our plan, and we mean to have a real good day of it."

The princess sighed. "How lovely!" she said. "I am all by myself, and I don't know much about—things. Could I get a boat, too? But of course not. It would cost too much."

"Cost too much! Bless you, it's only about fourpence all the way," cried the girl, laughing. And the young man said, rather shyly:

"Perhaps you'd like to come with us? I mean—we could show you where to go, and so on."

"Oh, would you—would you?" exclaimed Ella, delighted. "I should love to come with you, if I might, and share in the boat. But you will not want a perfect stranger," she added, regretfully.

They both assured her that they would be glad of her company, and told her their names—Tom and Alice Johnson. What was hers?

Again the princess quailed, and her carnations sprang to life. But—the fact must be insisted upon—she was a quick-witted princess.

"Ella—Ella Roy," she replied, promptly.

"You're not used to being out alone, are you?" Tom asked, glancing at her with increasing admiration.

"Not very often," she admitted; "but I love it. How nice it must feel to be free, quite free, always!"

"But no one ever is free," said Tom, with a shrug. "We are all the slaves of circumstance. Do you suppose that if I were free, I would be riding on a 'bus now? No fear!"

The princess opened her eyes wide. "Wouldn't you really?" she asked. "Why not? And what would you rather be doing?"

Could there be anything preferable to riding on the top of an omnibus? To her, at the moment, it seemed impossible.

"Of course, I'd rather be riding my own horse, or driving in my own carriage," was the quiet reply.

"I expect if we all had what we wanted, the world would be full of kings and queens, and lords and ladies! There would be no clerks or type-writers at all," said Alice, laughing.

Ella pondered. Was this true? Did people really wish they were kings and queens? And could they possibly think it was nicer to drive in a

victoria than on the top of an omnibus? She smiled to herself at the curious whims and follies of human nature.

"We get down here." Tom broke in upon her meditations with a touch on her arm. He led the way, and handed her off the omnibus as carefully as if she were Dresden china. They walked into the Park, and there, on a seat just inside the gate, was some one evidently waiting for them.

"Here you are, Ted!" Alice cried, going forward quickly to meet him. "We've come, you see! Allow me to introduce you to Miss Roy, who's going with us."

A tall youth in a gray suit and bowler hat saluted the princess with a flourish. He had a dark mustache, and was altogether reminiscent of a penny-novelette hero, as usually depicted on the front page of such delectable magazines. But Ella decided at once that he was not so nice as Tom—a decision based on no logical reasoning, but on pure intuition. That Tom was nice she had no shadow of doubt, and this elastic adjective did duty as a covering for her keenest tastes and largest enthusiasms. The other young man did not interest her, except, perhaps, as a specimen of a hitherto unknown species. His style, manner and speech were all agreeably novel, it is true; but Tom was also a novelty, with the additional qualification of niceness.

Under a spreading beech by ornamental water, the quartette sat round a table, and Alice drew forth a queer-looking long bag made of netted string, the like of which Ella had never before seen. It contained an unexpected supply of parcels, in which were sandwiches, buns, biscuits and cakes of various kinds. A waiter appeared from somewhere amid the trees, and to him Tom confided an order for strawberries. He then turned to the princess, and asked her what she would prefer to drink—spruce, gingerbeer or coffee? As she was somewhat ignorant of the nature of the first two beverages, her verdict

was in favor of coffee, and the command was given. But Ella had begun to realize that she was being hospitably entertained, and she protested.

"Oh, I am not hungry, really! I cannot take your luncheon. You have brought only enough for yourselves," she urged.

Alice quieted her scruples in a peremptory way. There was plenty for all, she declared, even the ducks. Thereupon Ted echoed, "Even the ducks!" and winked aside at Tom with great deliberation. "Ducks of all kinds," he continued, and laughed joyously. Tom gave him a glance of disgust, and refused to smile. Then Alice said: "Please say no more, dear, but make a good meal." At which Tom frowned again. He seemed to think his sister and Ted were treating the stranger too unceremoniously.

His own manner toward her was almost courtly. He watched her, and waited upon her with great deference; and the princess thought, several times, "How nice he is!" She smiled on him in a bewildering way till he did not know cake from sandwich, and absently threw strawberries, when he meant to throw stalks, into the river. For she was a wonderfully charming princess, and had eyes that were like blue stars, full of dazzling light.

Presently, Alice said:

"Do you know, Miss Roy, Ted thinks you are the image of the Princess Ella?"

The princess, who was just then inwardly reveling in the primitive thickness of her coffee-cup, started violently, and out came the carnations in her cheeks. She had never before blushed so much in her life as she was blushing to-day, this Royal maiden.

"I guess you've often been told that before," added Ted, smiling.

"Often—very often—constantly. In fact, my photograph has been taken for hers," she answered, glibly, recovering from her momentary shock; which makes it quite clear what a really quick-witted little princess she was.

"Well, you needn't feel flattered," observed Tom, gazing at her. "If the Princess Ella had only half your looks people might well rave about her. Oh, I'm not going to deny she's pretty," he went on, meditatively, "but there's something artificial about her, and she looks rather stupid in her pictures. Why, her eyes are no more like yours than—than blue glass marbles are like sapphires!"

"Good old Tom!" cried Ted, helping himself to a plump, brown bun. Alice remarked gaily that Tom ought to have been a poet, and he grew very red. The princess, sparkling and dimpling as a rivulet in the sun, declared that it was very nice of him to say such nice things about her. Her vocabulary was certainly limited, but, after all, emotion is not necessarily expressed in a wide choice of words.

The little party was extremely merry, with such merriment as the princess had never before known. She quite lost herself in it, and her childish laughter rose with that of the others in unconfined glee. All the riddles they asked were new to her, and she thought them preposterously funny. All their stories seemed the most original in the world; and if she could not feel the point of every joke they made, she could at least appreciate the fact that they *were* joking, and laugh with the jokers.

They fed the ducks, and then strolled down to the landing-stage, pair and pair, Tom and Ella leading. The mystery of the boat was now explained. It was a Thames steamer that was to take them to Twickenham—not a small barque, as the princess had imagined. She did not, however, betray the fact of her previous ignorance, or show by word or sign that she had expected to be sculled up the river. For she was a wise little princess, and knew when to keep her pretty mouth closed.

More delights awaited her on the boat. The motley crowd that jostled her there gave her tiny thrills of mingled repulsion and satisfaction: repulsion, because they did not all look

very clean or bear an agreeable aroma; satisfaction, because she felt herself to be one of the people, to be enjoying the liberty of the subject, the freedom of the city! And, furthermore, she thoroughly appreciated the society about her on account of its light-heartedness. Everybody seemed so jolly! Gay laughter and talk floated on the balmy air, and intermingled joyously with the strains of a harp, fiddle and cornet in the bows, playing wheezy, scrappy tunes of a popular character. Sometimes a whole phrase was in tune, but this was rare. The princess had never heard such music in her life, and it sounded to her indescribably humorous, causing her pretty face to beam in one continuous, happy smile, as at a huge jest.

Alice and Tom and Ted could not understand her bubbling mirth. They were enjoying themselves very much in their own way, but it was a different way from hers. Moreover, they were rather surprised to see one who had so recently suffered the bereavement of a purse, containing two sovereigns and several shillings, able to keep up such a steadily cheerful appearance. They could but conclude she must be rich, fabulously rich!

The princess did not regret her sovereigns, because, in her estimation, the pleasures of this day were worth all the gold of the mint. She did not care about the mint, but she did care very much for what she was getting in the place of her lost purse. If the purse had not been taken from her, she argued, her acquaintance with Tom and Alice would probably never have been made. And here she was with them, being swept along the great, historic river, in a big boat full of the most entertaining people, while the most comic music in the world set its strains vibrating right to the chords of irrepressible laughter. Could anything be more enchanting, more like the "Arabian Nights"?

Her joy reached a high altitude when Tom refused to translate a remark she heard a young person in a feathered hat make to another young person in a

pink-silk blouse. It sounded as if it might be a funny remark, and the princess wished to learn its purport; but Tom said it was "not quite nice." How delightful to be actually listening to things that were "not quite nice"—perhaps, even, quite wicked! She was thrilled again with a sensation of delicious horror. Once upon a time, she had surreptitiously read a book that her governess had said was "not quite nice," and had been terribly disappointed that she could not discover, unaided, wherein the not-niceness of it lay. For it is certainly annoying, when one is sixteen, to be convicted of crass innocence. But the remark of the plumed hat to the pink-silk blouse had a tone that she felt was not entirely lost upon her. It was definitely packed with meaning, and, although the sense of the actual words escaped her, she could, at least, remember what they were, and realize their awful, if vague, iniquity. So she experienced from them a sensation far more keen than the whole of that not-nice book had afforded!

A man came around to collect for the band, and Ella felt, for the first time since her humiliation before the omnibus conductor, the pinch of poverty. How could she give a few pence for the exquisite diversion that had been supplied to her by that tuneless harp, fiddle and cornet? She apologized sweetly to the weather-beaten, battered man in the gold-rimmed cap who appealed to her. "I have had my purse stolen, or I would give you more," she said, with touching dignity, as she dropped her remaining coppers into the box he presented. It is hard to have one's natural generosity checked by untoward circumstance; but, as she observed to Tom, "No doubt the man who took my purse was very poor, perhaps starving, or he wouldn't have done it."

"Isn't it perfectly lovely? Don't you thoroughly enjoy a day in the country?" exclaimed Alice, as they walked along the riverside at Twickenham. Ella recalled visions of certain stately drives through parks and villages in different

quarters of the United Kingdom, and concluded that she did love the country. To her, the word conjured up pictures of hunting-boxes and shooting-lodges; to Alice, it gave Epping Forest trees, Hampstead Heath spaces, and the Thames vistas; so that the two girls had a fairly equal knowledge of England's real heart of beauty—a pitifully limited knowledge.

At Twickenham Ferry they sang snatches of a once-popular song, and rested on the bank of the river, talking—again in couples. Then they found a tea-garden, and ordered a "strawberry tea." Ecstasy remained undiminished, so far as the Princess Ella was concerned. She had never tasted such tea as this, never eaten such strawberries, such bread and butter! Why, there was not even the shadow of a ghost of a suggestion of an orthodox meal about this *al fresco* repast. It transported her straight to Arcady.

And never before had she felt so gloriously hungry. Her appetite was a revelation!

After tea, they wandered forth again, two and two, along the shady roads and by the river. The evening shadows began to lengthen into grotesque, lean giants at their feet, and weirdly beautiful lights were cast upon the rippling water. It was nearly time for their return boat to arrive, and the conversation between Tom and the princess was broken, every now and then, by oppressive pauses. At last, as they were sitting on a bench under a mighty elm, whose wide-spread arms shut out the pearly twilight, Ella said, with a deep sigh of content:

"This has been quite the very nicest and happiest day I have ever spent in my life."

Even as she spoke, she realized the rebuke that would have followed this effusive expression of feeling, had it been uttered in the presence of her mother or very correct governess. "So extravagant and unrestrained!" she could hear them, in fancy, saying, and rejoiced once more in her liberty.

Tom did not immediately respond. When he did, it was to say:

"Ditto to that. I've never spent, or expect to spend, one like it. The worst of it is—" He stopped, abruptly. Ella urged him to go on.

"The worst of it is, I shall be so jolly miserable after it," he said, with a short laugh.

"Miserable!" she echoed, her eyes wide. "Why miserable? It will always give me the greatest pleasure to look back on it."

He sighed. "Well, I suppose, in a way, it will be a pleasure to me, too. But to-morrow I shall want to hang myself; the day after I shall be as cross as a bear; and, as time goes on, I sha'n't be able to think of to-day without—a kind of ache."

"I can't quite understand that," said the little princess, in her soft voice.

"Can't you? Don't you think I shall want to see you again?"

She was silent.

"And I never shall see you again," the youth went on, sadly. "I know that. I am not a fool. Do you suppose I don't know what you are?" She started. "Do you think I can't see that you're different from us? I've never met any girl in the least like you, never one so lovely and sweet, with such—ways. I don't know who you are, or what you are doing out alone, and I couldn't be so beastly rude as to ask questions. But I do know that we're not likely to meet again in this confounded world, and that is why I'm going to be miserable to-morrow—and ever afterward."

The princess felt her throat ache and her eyelids burn. She could not speak. He was such a nice boy, and she was so sorry for him! He seemed dreadfully sad, and she, too, began to feel sad. Why do happy days end so soon? Was it true that she would never see Tom, nice Tom, again? Her common sense replied, with the brutality for which common sense is famed, that it was perfectly true, that Tom would vanish from her life with the vanishing day. She sighed, a tremulous sigh, that made her companion clench his hands. He could bear his own sadness like a man; but hers—that was another thing.

"What a brute I am to talk like this!" he ejaculated. "And you were so happy! Say you forgive me, Ella? I must call you Ella, just once—my Princess Ella! I shall never see her name without thinking of you."

She put her hand into his, and smiled ravishingly, with another swift flowering of carnation.

"I am glad to hear you will think of me sometimes, Tom."

The catch in her voice was enough to turn any man's head round like a tee-totum, and it made Tom do a most unusual thing—unusual, that is to say, for a steady-going young clerk in a warehouse. He kissed that tender little hand. If he had been the sort of young clerk one accepts as a type, he would certainly have kissed the red lips from which the voice came, and perhaps the princess would have forgiven him; who knows? But there were unlooked-for elements in Tom, which may have been the reason why Ella thought him so nice. She thought it more than ever now. Indeed, she said to herself, "He is really very, *very* nice, and I do hope I shall see him again."

She resolutely refused to hear the grim voice of common sense as she walked down to the quay with Tom, talking only of the river and the colored lights upon it; thinking only of the earnest gray eyes that sought hers so insistently. It was impossible to believe that, after to-night, she would see those gray eyes no more. The boat came up, snorting and panting, with a great swish of water as it turned half-round to take in its fresh load of voyagers, and Ella went on board with the rest. She and Tom found a seat together in the bows, looking over into the shining, dark water. They talked little because there was too much they wanted to say. Both felt that they needed several years together in which to say it all, and the shortness of the time before them paralyzed their tongues.

On the top of the omnibus once more, the four chatted pleasantly.

The contents of a newspaper dis-

played upon a wall attracted Ted's attention.

"Look!" he cried; and they read:

"FORTHCOMING VISIT OF THE GRAND DUKE OF —. ROYAL WEDDING IN ANTICIPATION."

Ella felt a strange pang quiver through her heart. She had seen the grand duke once, and he seemed rather formidable. That he was coming to seek her hand in marriage was no more news to her than it was to the nation. It had never before troubled her, but now she felt oppressed by a consciousness that he could not be nearly so nice as Tom. Was he nice at all? Everybody said he was, but—

"It must be very horrid," said Alice, "to be married just for reasons of state. I should hate it."

She nestled up to Ted, who was, of course, her sweetheart. Ella saw that their hands were clasped under the light folds of Alice's cape, and a vague desire possessed her—vague, because she would have been ashamed to let herself feel entirely conscious that she wished Tom would take her hand like that. Yet the desire was conscious enough to send up a crimson flame to her face, the deep carnation she had worn so often that day.

"We—I mean, princesses are not married against their will, even for state reasons," she declared, in answer to Alice. "I would never marry any one I did not like—*never!* No one could make me."

"Ah, but you're not a princess, you see," cried Alice, lightly.

The streets were lighted by square glass boxes on high stands, each containing a broad yellow flame, and with blazes of the same amber-tinted light from shop windows. It was before the days of white street moons and flashing colored advertisement letters; but to the princess it was all very gorgeous.

"I wish you'd come and see us some day," said Alice, suddenly. "We should be so glad! Will you?"

Ella hesitated. "I am afraid," she

stammered, "I can't. I do not often get a day off like this, and——"

"But you don't work for a living, do you?" asked Alice, curiously.

"No, but—I am not free; I have duties," murmured the princess, uncomfortably.

Tom spoke up. "Alice never thinks any one but herself has anything to do," he said, with forced jocularly. "Of course, you know, Miss Roy, we should always be pleased to see you, but we sha'n't expect you. The best things are always unexpected."

The princess gave him a grateful smile. There was a pause, and then, suddenly remembering, she said:

"I have not thanked you yet for all your great kindness and the lovely day you've given me. I do now. I am *very* grateful. If you had not loaned me that money, and let me come with you, my day out would have been entirely spoiled. It was extremely nice of you both to be so nice to a perfect stranger, and I shall not forget it. Will you please let me have your address, that I may send back the shilling I owe you? Not that I can ever properly repay—" She broke off, abruptly, for her voice was becoming uneven.

"Our address is 295, George street, Upton Park," Alice replied, "but we would much rather you did not return the money. It's nothing. It has been a great pleasure to have your company."

The princess set her bright wits to work. She felt so grateful to them, yet did not know how to show it. At last she said, unfastening the jeweled buckle of her belt, a costly thing of Indian silver-work and uncut turquoises, to which the stolen purse, equally valuable, had been attached: "Will you accept this in remembrance of me? I shall be so glad if you will. And if you'll give me the little brooch you are wearing, to remind me of you and of one really happy day, I shall be still gladder. Will you?"

The exchange was effected, with much fervid appreciation on both sides. Tom sat in moody silence as the omni-

bus rolled on, until it came to a certain place. Then he jumped up, heroically.

"You must get off here, Miss Roy," he said, going first to help her down the last steps to the road. She clung to his hand. He could never forget that pressure.

"May I come with you—just a little way?" he pleaded. She declined his escort with gentle firmness, and they stood a few minutes together on the curb, dumbly watching the traffic without seeing it.

At last the princess raised her starry eyes to Tom's face, and held out her hand.

"Give me that bunch of meadow-sweet," he implored, unsteadily. It was pinned in the folds of her gown, just where the lace edge of a handkerchief peeped out. She gave him the drooping flowers, and the handkerchief with them.

That night he found a crown in one corner of the filmy lawn; but he was not a whit surprised. Had he not known all along that she was—different?

As she bestowed her parting gift upon him, Tom received a sudden jar

behind, and felt the brim of his straw hat impinge against another. The muttered words, "Stupid fool!" made him conscious of offense given, and he turned mechanically to make apology to a broad woman in broad headgear who scowled at him as she clambered into a passing omnibus. When he turned back again, the princess had vanished. He strained his eyes in vain to catch one last glimpse of her among the hustling, bustling people in the street; but she had gone. He felt that she had gone out of his life. He walked all the way home without discovering how tired he was.

The princess fled toward the palace. Her maid stood in the shadow of the huge gates, waiting for her.

"Your highness is late," she said, "but it is all right so far. Nothing has happened."

"You are mistaken," replied Ella; "many things have happened, and some very nice things. Oh, how I wish——!"

But we stand no chance of ever hearing what the Princess Ella wished, for she broke off her sentence with a sigh, and it was never finished.



RECIPE FOR A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

A DOLLAR gift to give your wife,
 A half for Tom and Sue,
 And eighty-nine cents set aside
 For wife to give to you;
 Ten cents, with wise economy,
 Will baby's stocking fill,
 And for the janitor reserve
 A hundred-dollar bill!

McLANDBURGH WILSON.



[T is easier to get a wife than to keep her.

CONFIDENCES

TWO sat in shadow, Youth and Age,
 In garments gray, in garments gold,
 The life of one a half-writ page,
 The other's years a volume scrolled.

"Dear saint," said Youth, "I'll clasp your hands,
 And rest against your tranquil knee,
 And, while we hear the falling sands,
 I'll speak, and pray you answer me.

"Upon the hill the battle roars
 Where my days pass with fret and pain.
 This vale of sleepy streams is yours,
 Of blurring mists and soft, sweet rain.

"The scars are deep on my young palms,
 Where bars have pressed and shut me out.
 But you rest here with low, drooped arms,
 Away from yearning, striving, doubt.

"I long, I hope, I struggle still.
 Defeat whets hunger. Ah, for peace!
 Can years alone this striving kill,
 And only time make aching cease?

"Fight as I may, the meed is small.
 I cry to heaven—the stars are cold.
 The blows of life, love's ache and thrall—
 Would they were past, and I were old!"

The shriveled lips of Age laughed long—
 Laughter of grief not good to hear,
 Joy's coronach, the soul's swan song,
 The laughter of the falling tear.

"O fretful child, and mad desire!
 For the grave's awesome hush you pray.
 Ah, but to change this peace to fire,
 Take torment, scars—and one dead day!"

KATE JORDAN.



EACH of us is the censor of his own morals, but many of us have mislaid our
 blue pencils.

THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG LOGAN

By Edna Kenton

THAT his father was a successful Chicago business man, tells to the initiated how much of his time was spent on the boy. That his mother was a club-woman of imposing presence and unimpeachable theories, explains the lines along which his rearing was conducted. That he had not the saving grace of a sister or two is, perhaps, the explanation of the whole affair.

From the time an experimenting Providence had placed in her arms a son, Mrs. Logan had smiled pityingly over the statements of many mothers to the effect that their theories on child-rearing, kicked sky-high by the first of their jewels, had been at last reduced to absurdity. But of theories there is no end. Some are working ones; some are not. Mrs. Logan could say, and she did say on every proper occasion, that, from the moment of his birth, her child had been bred up along those lines of conduct she so urgently advocated for her friends and enemies alike; and that never one of these theories had been thrown out of gear. In consequence, therefore, of his having been held up so frequently as a pillar of light, whereby his mother might guide through the mazy wildernesses of parental responsibility wandering and distraught mothers of Israel, young Logan, just returned from college, had awaiting him a trying test.

The Logans lived in a pretty little square on the South Side, opening off from an avenue near Thirty-seventh street; one of the few spots in the restless city which had a permanent home atmosphere about it; which disdained apartment-seekers and moving vans;

which, on May first, placidly ate its quiet family dinners in serene ignoring of the thousands of salmon and sardine and biscuit luncheons in process while a great city was in the throes of its annual hejira. Arthur had therefore grown up with "the square" boys and girls; but for four years he had been at college or traveling, and the whole square was on the *qui vive* to see what sort of model son this might be.

It is quite true that Arthur had never given his mother a moment's cause for anxiety. Her own absolute confidence in the efficacy of her methods tided her safely over that period of natural worry intervening between cause and effect; but, after results once began to show themselves, it was plain that it was no blind Providence which had placed in such hands this tiny offshoot of the Infinite. Mrs. Logan proved faithful to her clubs, her son, her home and her husband; and, unaided, she brought up to manhood a boy who was her pride and joy. It was her theory, her pet one, that the mother is the parent who shall have the highest charge over a son; and it was owing, perhaps, as much to this pet hypothesis of his wife's as to his own devotion to business that Logan and his son were comparative strangers to each other, and hardly at ease when together.

Upon Arthur's final return from college, he found his mother tenderly overjoyed to see him, and his father friendly, if slightly tentative. That portly gentleman listened at dinner to his son's mild and utterly innocuous chatter, frowned over the suspicion of a lisp that was not the boy's fault at all, and grinned to himself at the artistic

and literary flavor of the conversational menu through which he and his mother were happily wending their way. Arthur's light-yellow hair was just a little longer than he had worn at the Christmas vacation. His blue eyes had an infantile look in their innocent depths, at which Logan swore softly, and without gaining satisfaction thereby. Logan was a man with an extremely subtle sense of humor, a humor gratified more often than his wife knew at her expense. He realized to-night that there was much that was quietly funny in the scene before him, but his sense of fun seemed blunted. After all, when a man has an only son—

"It's quite true," he muttered, over his solitary cigar—Arthur had learned to smoke in his sophomore year, but had given it up at his mother's agonized request—"it's quite true. Let a boy be too much with women, and he turns out something woozy; which isn't decrying a mother's influence. There's just some queer difference between a man's and a woman's ethics which makes the fact a fact. And surely," added Logan, plaintively, "the Creator won't hold I'm knocking my own wife when I'm only seeing with open eyes the laws of creation as He Himself ordained them. Amen!"

Then he went through the hall, glanced into the library where Arthur sat holding his mother's hand, frowned slightly, took his hat, and went down to the Union League Club for the evening.

The immediate thing for Arthur to do was to go into business, and a place had been awaiting him for many years. Logan was a civil engineer, a man of large contracts and large schemes and heavy undertakings, and Arthur went into harness very soon after his return. Logan, after a short trial, was bound to confess that his son got down to work with a good deal of earnestness, and was rather more careful and attentive to business than the general run of young fellows. He was ungrudgingly faithful to the smallest details of the unpleasant work he was set to do, and the father

was intensely gratified to find the boy did not once complain to him or to his mother.

"He's a clean young fellow," thought Logan, as he and Arthur left the office together one evening—a thing that rarely happened, for Arthur was slightly afraid of the taciturn gentleman, and Logan was secretly uncomfortable in his son's company. Yet, as they walked on together, the boy doing most of the talking, and the father listening and smiling now and then at some queer conceit, some fresh young ignorance of the world, and at the tiny lisp that always came when the boy was eager or embarrassed, he found himself, while listening, carrying on a distinct line of commenting thought.

"He's a clean young fellow. He's as fresh and innocent as a sister of his might have been, and how it's happened I can't see. He's had no special restraints placed on him. He's had plenty of chances at school for breaking over. He's not exactly a muff, and yet he is. The fellows at the office don't take to him, and yet there's nothing repellent or aggressive about him. He's just queerly different."

As they entered the square together, two girls sitting on the steps of the Forman home called eagerly, "Oh, Mr. Logan!"

Logan the elder turned quickly, and it took rather a longer time than he was willing later to admit to find it was his son who was wanted. He left Arthur talking to the Forman girls, and walked on, smiling at his surprise, and conscious of a dull awakening tugging within him.

"Mr. Logan!" he found himself repeating, as he sat down on his own veranda, and looked across the square at the Forman house. Nothing, not even Arthur going into business, had struck him with the realization of things as this ordinary happening: Arthur called to by two girls! It was an aging moment, the moment of realization that his child was a man. Logan sat there wrestling with the grim problem, with his own emotions. He felt a sudden brutal distaste for the boy. He

thought of apoplectic Colonel Sperry, who had only that morning told him he had just settled something like two thousand dollars of unnecessary debts contracted that year at Yale by his own hopeful young son. Logan knew the Sperry boy—a wide-awake, bull-doggy, impudent young hound. He knew he ought to be devoutly glad over a son whose expenses had come within the moderate allowance made him, who had conducted himself with credit, if not with high honor. Yet, in that moment, he envied the apoplectic Sperry and his sputtering wrath. Wrath was the proper emotion to feel, of a surety, but Logan had detected beneath it apoplectic pride, and he sympathized with it.

Yet he started guiltily as his wife came calmly upon him, and he hurriedly pushed away his heretical yearnings. It was better that the paying of those bills had been Sperry's task, and not his. Life was happier so. Mrs. Logan followed his eye as she sat down by him.

"I wonder if that cousin of the Forman girls has come," she said. "The girls were over yesterday, urging me to have Arthur call immediately." And she smiled the contented smile of a mother whose fair daughter has just been led out by the parti of the season.

The Forman cousin had arrived; so Arthur announced when he came in late for dinner. He had just met her. He was to go over later for the evening. He chattered through the meal with that light-heartedness, plus the serious touch to all things, which delighted his mother, and then went off to dress. He came into the library before he left. He looked almost girlish in his evening clothes.

"I sha'n't be back till late, mother," he said; "perhaps not till twelve."

"We sha'n't put the chain on, dear," said his mother, contentedly. "You have your night-key?"

Arthur nodded, and went whistling forth, across the square, to the Forman house, to see the Forman cousin.

It was indeed very late—almost

midnight—when Arthur came back. He was not whistling now. He was humming, softly, Chaminade's "L'an-neau d'argent."

*"Le cher anneau d'argent que vous m'avez donné,
Garde en son cercle étroit nos promesses en-closes——"*

He went lightly up the steps, used his night-key with his usual thoughtfulness for slumberers within, and crept up to his room, still humming under his breath. He got into a dressing-gown and some soft-soled slippers—his mother's room was beneath his, and he was always careful not to disturb her—and then he began to rummage through the bookcases that lined the walls of his den.

*"—De tant de souvenirs recéleur obstiné,
Lui seul m'a consolée en mes heures mo-
roses——"*

Ah! here it was—"Prose Fancies," and "The Book-Bills of Narcissus." Now, where in the world—Arthur's strongest expression in times of stress—was that Maeterlinckian thing:

*"Tel un ruban qu'on mit autour de fleurs
écloses
Tient en cor le bouquet alors qu'il est fané——"*

Here it was—"The Life of the Bee." He snuggled the volumes together. They would make fascinating reading. She wanted to know Le Gallienne and Maeterlinck better, and he was to bring her the books the next morning—Arthur corrected himself. It was a new and not unpleasing experience to say "this morning." After a little thought, he added a tiny volume of poems by Henley to the pile. As he hunted for that book, his hand had slipped along the gaudy cover of "Soldiers of Fortune." He smiled happily. She had said that Clayton was her absolute ideal of what a man should be, brave and true and with a mission. He frowned as he caught a glimpse of his slight figure in the shadowy mirror. He was not cast in a heroic mold. But she cared for what mattered—the spirit of things. He drew a deep breath into his little lungs. What a glorious thing his pro-

fession was, constructing for future ages!

"Le cher anneau d'argent——"

He decided to take off the Henley book. His fine little taste told him three books were a great plenty for a first time. Perhaps, in the evening, as an afterthought—Arthur grinned wickedly to himself—he might run over with Henley. He made ready for the night, still humming, happily:

*"Lorsque je dormirai, très pâle sur des roses,
Je veux qu'il brille encore à mon doigt idécharné
Le cher anneau d'argent que vous m'avez
donné."*

Arthur ate a hurried breakfast the next morning, and then, still whistling the Chaminade dirge to rag-time swing, he hurried across the square. Here, behind a fairly luxuriant display of clambering roses, the Hobart girl, otherwise the Forman cousin, awaited his arrival.

The Hobart girl was a young woman of much manner. She did not wear a shirt-waist suit, the thing to which the Forman girls were addicted morning, noon and night. The Hobart girl was a Southern girl who wore floating whites and pinks and blues and lavers. This morning it was floating white. She thanked him for the books with just the right note of serious gratitude in her voice. She said she wanted to know his friends. She touched the volumes gently, and Arthur, for the first time, felt *en rapport* with the very spirit of genius.

Just as he was leaving, she said something at which he turned back, and insisted on the reason why. It seemed she had taken him at first for an artist, and he insisted on hearing the reason, insisted with all of youth's shy conceit and eagerness to get at the root of personal allusion. She explained at last, gently, half-laughingly, and Arthur flushed hotly. He had heard the same thing before, from the fellows in the glee club, from the men at the office, from his father. But this put a different phase on the matter.

"Of course," the Hobart girl added, hastily, "if you really were an artist—

but you are going to be a business man."

"I should like an artist's life," said Arthur, in a grievous voice, "but I don't know what I could do, you know."

"Oh, artists are so common!" breathed the Hobart girl. "And think of your field, Mr. Logan. Such wonderful chances for building—er—houses—and that. I told you last night what I thought about it."

"You made it seem human for the first time," said Arthur, gratefully, who could not know, of course, that the Hobart girl had never heard of civil engineering till she read of it from the dress-clothes standpoint of "Soldiers of Fortune."

That morning, Arthur was late for the first time in the history of his connection with the firm. When he at last presented himself, at ten o'clock, Logan looked up in stern reproof, a look which gave quick right of way to stupor-like amazement. For Arthur's yellow hair was shingled, fairly shingled. His pink scalp was the most striking note of color about his head, for the pale golden hair, in its tensely abbreviated condition, did not count one shade's value. And instead of his usual loose style of neck-wear he modestly, almost shrinkingly, wore a tiny "bat-wing" affair in dull gray. Logan's stern call died on his lips, and he turned back to his desk with a mere grunt. For the first time, and this, too, when he should have looked the man, his son looked boyish. Arthur had worn kilts late, and, when relegated from that effeminacy into trousers, he had looked to Logan only more the girl, masquerading. Logan wondered how the boy's head felt, shaven clean for the first time. Yet he did not venture on an inquiry. Arthur was not humorous, and Logan hated to waste a good thing. Then he felt a delicate forbearance against hurting the boy, much the same feeling he had for a defenseless woman.

The Hobart girl was to spend the Winter with the Formans. During the

Summer, men are scarce, and Arthur filled in well his little chink. He fairly haunted the house across the way. Arthur with his shingled pate, Arthur with his mandolin, Arthur with his new briskness of walk and talk—it was a new Arthur.

Mrs. Logan looked on, approving all but the shingled hair. Logan's subtlety did not extend beyond his humorous sense. To both him and his wife these frequentings of the Forman house meant no more than they had meant eight years before, when the Forman boys were numerous and energetically versatile, and Arthur was a merry little fellow, more than ready to admire valor that he could not emulate, and always in demand as the audience in any private-talent circus.

But, when October came, and with it many manly standards of comparison, Arthur suffered in the eyes of the older Forman girl, who was still very young, and who dubbed his presence gray monotony. And then it was that the Hobart girl, having kept a trained hand well in training during the Summer, found foemen coming worthy of her finely tempered steel. And then it was that Arthur, having passed many nights and days in torturing suspense, decided that he would gird himself about, and do battle.

One night in late October, he strode doggedly up to his room. He had just left the Forman house. His face was white, and his teeth were set. It was his first experience, and it had gone hard. Yet the Hobart girl had been unusually kind. She had said delicate things about his youth, his unproven powers, her own ideals, the fact that the way to her heart lay in achievement, great achievement laid at her feet, an offering to those ideals of hers so infinitely higher than mere love.

"And if I do great things," Arthur had broken in, doggedly, "if I do them, and come to you, what then?"

He tried to recall her answer, but he could get only the manner of it. For his brain was one great memory of her gentle warning, that it would be better for her not to see too much of him—

she had explained why, and he assented dully. His lips were firmly set. There were great things to be done, in his own calling, too, the calling she had pronounced so glorious a one. "A maker of ways," she had called him, one who constructed for future generations. He lay awake for many hours that night, thinking. His little brain was fairly teeming with ideas when he finally dropped asleep, and, just at dawn, he awoke with a great start. His dreams had answered his longing cry. He had his work.

From that day the Forman home knew him not. Until he completed his task, and received his knighthood, pleasure was a thing forbid. Now and then he met the Hobart girl, not so often as one might suppose. At such times, he always flushed or paled with an irritatingly inconsequent sequence which annoyed him. He varied mechanics by day with telepathic research by night. Some remarkable experiences he jotted down, for possible happy comparison in a dear future.

Logan wondered, at times, what was filling his son's mind to the exclusion of all save immediate business. Once in a while the boy asked him for some authority, or put a direct question about mechanics, questions that Logan always made a point of answering fully, even though he might not understand what the boy was driving at. And so the Winter rolled away, and the Hobart girl still lingered, and Arthur's feverish work neared completion.

One evening, he came home late. His father had left the office at noon—it was Saturday—but Arthur had stayed. As his mother called to him from the dining-room, he answered that he had dined down-town. He ran up to his room, and dressed excitedly. And he hummed, unconsciously:

"Le cher anneau d'argent que vous m'avez donné—"

He stopped to laugh. A silver ring, indeed! one carved from a solid diamond, and then set with stones to match its great blue lights would not be enough! Just at the last, he groped in the dark for a roll of blue paper

lying on a table, and with that grasped tightly in his hand, he went out of the house, and across the square, and so, for the first time in months, over to the Forman house.

"But you don't understand what I am trying to tell you." It was Arthur's voice an hour later, but Arthur's voice strained and uncertain. The Hobart girl was sitting in a great, high-backed chair, in something floating. To Arthur's excited eyes the breath-like motions of her gown seemed dizzy undulations of the floor beneath his feet.

"You don't understand," he repeated. "This is the greatest thing Chicago has to face in the near future. We've got to get rid of surface lines soon, and there's a cry for plans that are safe and reasonable and easy to complete. Capital is asking for them. That night," his voice broke a little, "when you sent me away—to do some great thing waiting to be done—I got the idea that night." He struck the paper lying before her. "The next morning, I went to work at the thing. Here it is, finished. There's the last line—there. I put it in at six this evening. And then I came straight to you."

The Hobart girl traced out some white lines on the dull-blue paper.

"That was very nice of you," she murmured, with gracefully concealed ennui. "What is that? Oh! Why, no, I didn't expect you—that is, not to-night. But it was very nice of you, even though I don't know much about subways, and—er—arches—and that."

"But you said you liked it all!" cried Arthur, with indignant pleading. "You understand this, don't you, that it's a big thing? I wanted you to see it first. To-morrow, I'm going to get big men to pass on it, but I know it's all right. I stayed away from you all Winter because I could work better—because I wanted to come back to you with something worth while, worthy—your love."

Then the Hobart girl laughed—a laugh that shook her white shoulders,

a laugh that was utterly amused, a laugh that could not be smothered.

"I had forgotten all about—that," she said, with real honesty. "And you've been working? That was nice of you. I hope it's a great success, but really—for the rest, you know—"

What happened then is best found out by going to some West Side theatre, and staring with eagerness at Act III. of whatever melodrama may be running. For Arthur, never before natural in all his narrow little life, was rent in twain by nature and emotion. And nature is very melodramatic. It is only art that is restrained. The scene was an instructive one. For the Hobart girl was nothing if not a product of art; and if nature can amuse art with its extravagances, art may madden nature with its pruned replies. That was the story of what ensued. The Hobart girl was distinctly amused. One could see it was only a fine sense of the fitness of things that kept her from melodramatic mirth. And Arthur was as distinctly maddened. He tore those carefully drawn papers into effective shreds, and dropped them at her suède-shod feet. He brought up incidents in their early acquaintanceship that were better let alone. He referred scathingly to the snake-like charm she had wound about "Le cher anneau d'argent" and, at last, he hurled straight at her that night—on the lagoon—when she had sanctioned— He stopped then, and stared at her, and found she was still laughing. If the memory of that night—and the lagoon—and the tacit consent to what followed—if that did not bring shame— It was in that moment that Arthur incoherently learned the lesson that before Delilah any man is a shorn Samson.

As he went blindly down the steps, after slamming the door with a bang that he hoped would show her his feelings, he carried away with him the memory that he had left her laughing, the sure intuition that she was laughing still. When he reached his own steps, he was shaking with rage. He had never

been swayed and buffeted by black fury before. He looked into the dark pit of his newly discovered soul, and found it seething with several emotions whose names he did not know, and whose companionship is not pleasant. He said over to himself several epithets that, late in the talk, and in mild revenge for Arthur's stirring of dead ashes, the Hobart girl had allowed herself to use—epithets thought-provoking and searching, if unpleasant to hear and remember. Somehow, the thought came to him of a case at college, the only case he knew to match this, the case of one Forbes, who had also come to grief over—Arthur stopped, aghast. Then he set his teeth, and said it again: “—some damn girl!” The story of that person Forbes leaped in detail into his mind. Suddenly, he wheeled about. He had heard Forbes's own account of how he came to his senses. Forbes had recommended his method as a cure. Forbes had tested it, and found it good. Arthur's hands were madly clenched. His pride was cutting his spirit to ribbons. He plunged into the velvety blackness of the night. He stopped for a moment at the corner drug-store, and called up Douglas 222222. It was really to his credit that he remembered that simple thing. Then he went forth again—to test Forbes's cure.

Three days later, Logan was making ready to leave his office. There was a worried frown on his forehead. He started nervously as his door opened. He turned, and saw his son. The boy came toward him shamblingly. His clothes were untidy; his linen was soiled; his face was haggard, and his eyes were blood-shot and shifting. His hat was pulled low over his face. Logan turned again.

“Glad you're back,” he said, over his shoulder. “That Wainwright Brothers' matter came up to-day, and no one knew much about it. I got into your desk, and couldn't find the December vouchers. Can you get them right now?”

Arthur went over mechanically, and got out the vouchers, and his father examined them with exceeding care. Suddenly, he glanced from them straight into the boy's blood-shot eyes. Arthur flushed, miserably.

“I just dropped in—to tell you—I can't go home this way.”

Logan's eyes were on the papers again. “Your mother's out of town,” he said, briefly.

Arthur gasped, incoherently: “Doesn't—she—know?”

“I got your mixed-up telephone, you remember,” said Logan, curtly. “I had your Aunt Clare telegraph her the next morning. She's there now!”

Arthur drew a long breath. He fumbled at his coat. “I've been—mad,” he said. “I've been—”

Logan got up, and laid a hand on the boy's shoulder. “Been pretty drunk, haven't you?” he said. “Pretty well done up? High time, though. Well, it's a little harder than I thought it would be to see my boy going through it, but—” Logan stopped, after the custom of American fathers when they find themselves approaching the loathsome quicksand of sentiment. He pulled out his watch to cover up the pause. “If we hustle, we can make the five forty-seven,” he said.

Arthur stared hazily at his father. “I thought you'd—” he stammered.

Logan's mouth twitched. “It's dead sure not to be veal to-night,” he said, briefly, “for Jane dished that up yesterday. But the fatted calf may be only another symbol. Come, my boy.”

Arthur picked up a clothes-brush lying near, and gave a few wandering strokes to his garments. Logan went over to the boy's open desk, and closed it.

“I ran into a bushel-load of drawings in here,” he said, with a tact of which he was distinctly conscious, and on which he privately congratulated himself. It was high time for a change of subject, and here lay the new one, ready to his hand. “Been

working on that perpetual-motion problem of the town—subway?"

"Some," said Arthur, gruffly.

"Looks it," said Logan. "Too bad you're off."

Arthur looked up. His jaw dropped heavily. "Off!" he repeated.

Logan laid a firm finger on a set of calculations. "Lateral pressure—no resistance—lateral strain makes an egg-shell of it. Good for a country road—splendid."

Logan laid the papers down, and closed the desk. Arthur had resumed his aimless occupation with the clothes-brush. Suddenly, his father, waiting by the door, heard a sound that made him turn. Arthur was staring out of the window. His hands were thrust deep in his pockets. The deep scowl on his face made Logan be-

lieve he had been mistaken, but even as he looked he heard it again, the only distinctly humorous chuckle he had ever heard from his son's lips.

For the first time in years, Logan yielded to a hungry impulse. He strode across the room, and struck Arthur a staggering blow on the back.

"That's right, kid," he said. "Take it just that way."

Arthur looked at his father. He pushed his battered hat away from his eyes to the very back of his head.

"It's all—sort of—funny," he said, slowly.

And though neither knew just what the other meant, they had, for the first time since "kid" became a tabooed word in Mrs. Logan's nursery, a common bond of sympathy, a bond that, by-and-bye, might unfold many things.



A LOVER'S PLAIN

SHE gives me things at Christmas-time
 Of cardboard, silk, and lace,
 For which, alas! I have no use,
 And never find a place;
 And handkerchiefs, and satin ties
 Embroidered with my name,
 And pillows done in fancy stitch,
 With every kind of game.

She sends me costly trifles, too,
 Card-cases set with gems,
 Tobacco-jars, and old blue steins,
 And pipes with amber stems.
 But what I want the most of all,
 Aye, more than fame or pelf,
 The sweet coquette year after year
 Withholds—and that's herself!

MINNA IRVING.



LET your light so shine before men that they cannot see what's going on behind it.

IN THE TOILS

By Tom Masson

MR. AND MRS. PETERBY, in their quiet little suburban home, lived a life of peace and plenty, tranquillity and comfort. Long since retired from business, Mr. Peterby spent his time in watering his flowers, chatting with the neighbors, and sitting on his piazza enjoying his occasional cigar.

The very appearance of this happy couple carried a conviction of quaint harmony. Their lives were calm routine, undisturbed by the tumult of the world. Removed from the main current of life, they carried with them such a lesson of contentment that it seemed almost a pity that they could not have been exhibited at certain times, for the benefit of their fellow-creatures.

Mr. Peterby rose at a specified hour, ate for his breakfast certain dishes, took his morning stroll, and invariably, after his luncheon, when the weather was fine enough to permit it, sat on his porch, and viewed the passers-by with beneficent and quiescent vision.

During these times, one of Mr. Peterby's favorite amusements was looking at the automobiles. At first, they incensed him, because of the dust; but, by reimbursing the man with the water-cart, that individual's trips became so frequent as to do away entirely with this discomfort; and the puffing and blowing and occasional odors—all of these Mr. Peterby became gradually accustomed to.

"There can be no doubt," said Mr. Peterby to his wife, "that these machines are wonderful. They whizz by with such rapidity, they fairly make me dizzy."

One day, Mr. Peterby, sitting peacefully upon his piazza, picked up a copy of a magazine that came regularly, and, glancing idly over its pages, was attracted by an article entitled, "The Cost of Automobiling."

Having nothing better to do, he read it through.

It happened, about this time, that a certain investment Mr. Peterby had made when he retired from business, had turned out very well. A dividend had just been declared, which, leaving him with more than double the amount of his investment, gave him, in addition, several thousands in ready cash.

It occurred to Mr. Peterby, as he sat there with the calm blue smoke curling upward through the honeysuckles, that with this money he might get an automobile, and have a little fun.

"Think of what it would mean," he said to himself, "if, on a pleasant afternoon, I could be whirled through the country for fifty or a hundred miles, and come back in time for supper."

The thought grew upon him. He broached it to his wife. They talked it over—first by day, then by night, then by day and night.

And one fine, sunny day, Mr. Peterby's automobile was delivered to him.

His delight upon that occasion cannot be described. He examined every part with loving and critical eye. In a short time, he was ready to give a lecture on the extraordinary merits of his particular purchase.

"At first," he said to Mrs. Peterby, "we will take only short trips, until I have thoroughly mastered it."

The next day, they started out bright and early. There were slight delays, of course. The machine was new and stiff. But, on the whole, they got along very well.

The next morning it rained, and Mr. Peterby chafed under cover all day.

"I haven't seen you so uneasy for years," remarked Mrs. Peterby.

"It's because," said Peterby, "I never had such a good time, and I long to get at it again."

And so, almost before the last drop had fallen, he was off. Thus the days and the weeks went by.

It had become evident to Peterby that a fuller acquaintance with his machine was necessary. And so he had been obliged to make frequent trips to town, to see the agent. Repairs had to be made, new parts to be supplied.

Peterby began to grow thin. His irregular meals were telling upon him. His flowers were neglected. He was so nervous that, in the night, he would frequently start up in his sleep, and clutch the bed-clothes.

One afternoon, Mrs. Peterby, restless herself and unhappy, sat disconsolately, her eye resting on piles of automobile papers that littered the table, when her husband's step was heard at the door, and that once peaceful gentleman's form, now shaking and almost tottering, entered the room.

"My dear," he exclaimed, "I've done it at last! I've sold my automobile, and, please God, another serpent like this shall never enter our home."

Mrs. Peterby uttered a cry of relief, while her face lighted up with joy.

"You couldn't have done anything that would have pleased me more!" she exclaimed. "But, my dear, I am afraid it will take us a long time to recover from this. Think of the happy, quiet days we used to spend together. Now you have acquired habits that you may never break. Even if you have given up your automobile, how are we going to recover our peace of mind?"

Mr. Peterby impatiently lighted a cigarette—for his dusty throat now demanded this stimulant—and looked at her contemptuously.

"Why, I didn't say," he exclaimed, "that I had given up my automobile! I said I had sold it. I've got another that's twice as good!"

And his sorrowing wife knew then that all hope was lost.



TO HER VEIL

WHY has Laura cast you off?
 I would I knew the reason.
 Is it her vanity, caprice,
 Or are you out of season?
 Mayhap she merely feared that you
 Perniciously would spoil my view.
 And yet, I ween, this heartless deed
 Was prompted by Dame Venus.
 Laura cast you off—because
 She knew you'd come between us!

LEONIDAS WESTERVELT.

LA LETTRE DE CHANGE

Par Paul et Victor Margueritte

RAGEUSEMENT, M. Muglin froissa la lettre, comme s'il allait la mettre en pièces ou la jeter au feu, puis ses gros doigts noueux se détendirent, et d'un geste brusque il plia le malencontreux papier, le fourra dans la poche de son veston. Ses veines saillaient sur son front contracté; il étouffait de colère. Il se leva, repoussant du pied son fauteuil, et, de long en large, de la portière en peluche verte au bon feu de braises qui rougeoyait, il arpenta le plancher qui tremblait, le salon intime où sa femme cousait sous la lampe, tandis qu'Hortense, à sa petite table habituelle, poursuivait ses silencieuses patiences.

Les deux femmes baissaient la tête, cachant leur émotion profonde sous un air absorbé, une attention feinte. Mme Muglin, du bout de l'aiguille, comptait ses points. Hortense semblait réfléchir à de savantes combinaisons. Mais l'orage était sur elles. Elles le sentaient peser à leurs faibles nerfs. Elles souhaitaient presque qu'il éclatât, espérant en détourner ainsi sur elles, innocentes, l'inévitable violence.

M. Muglin s'arrêta, les regarda en face. La lumière dorée de la lampe nimbait le doux visage réfléchi de sa femme; l'expression douloureuse des yeux, le triste sourire au coin de la bouche l'irritèrent. Il y voulut voir un blâme à son adresse, une excuse maternelle pour le coupable. Le mutisme même d'Hortense lui sembla parlant; il scruta la vieille face ridée, impassible, à demi estompée dans la pénombre, où les cheveux blancs, seuls, luisaient. Il serra les poings:

— Oui, oui, vous le plaignez, le scé-

lérat, le misérable! Et c'est moi qui ai tort, n'est-ce pas?... Venir me prendre dans ma poche, me voler, oui, me voler, il n'y a pas d'autre mot, dix mille francs dont j'ai besoin... Donner sa signature quand on sait qu'on ne pourra y faire honneur!... C'est vil, c'est bas!... Ce n'est même pas le vol franc, courageux; c'est la fraude honteuse, c'est l'acte d'un vulgaire filou, une infamie doublée d'un mensonge!... Mon fils!

Les mots lui restaient dans la gorge, étranglée d'indignation. Peureuses, et ne sachant que dire, bouleversées de douleur, les deux femmes se taisaient toujours. Toute leur force passait à retenir leurs larmes.

M. Muglin puisa dans ce silence une exaspération nouvelle:

— Vous trouvez cela naturel, avouez-le. Vous l'approuvez peut-être?

Il interpella sa femme:

— Toi, tout ce que fait ton fils te paraît beau, juste, sacré! L'orgueil maternel te rend folle. Quant à Hortense, parbleu! son neveu, demain, ne se contenterait plus d'être un voleur, elle apprendrait que c'est un assassin, elle l'approuverait toujours! Elle n'aime que lui!

M. Muglin mit dans ces derniers mots une amertume particulière, comme le sarcasme d'un reproche personnel. Frère adoré, unique ami de la vieille fille, jusqu'à ce que le petit Jean naquît, il n'avait pas vu sans un chagrin secret, et presque un peu de rancune, l'affection jusque-là exclusive de sa sœur se détourner de lui, se reporter presque toute vers le nouveau venu, cet être cher et fragile sur qui toutes les espérances de la famille reposaient... —

"Ce chenapan, ce drôle!..." Mme Muglin, cette fois, n'y put tenir. De grosses larmes lui coulèrent, longuement, silencieusement des yeux; elles glissaient sur ses joues brûlantes, sur sa broderie où l'aiguille, machinale, allait, venait, s'obstinait. Hortense, évitant le regard de son frère, hochait la tête; elle contemplait fixement le mur, sévère, comme si elle eût aperçu quelque chose au loin, loin, bien loin dans le passé.

Soudain, M. Muglin se rassit, ulcéré, devant le feu. Et, sur ces trois êtres naguère joyeux, sur le salon intime, tout à l'heure si calme, dans la provinciale paix du soir d'hiver enveloppant la petite ville, de nouveau le silence tomba, mais un silence gros cette fois de chagrins et de colère. Mme Muglin soupira: comme on était tranquille, avant que cette lettre fatale n'arrivât! Et dans son cœur de mère elle cherchait à son fils des excuses: le pauvre enfant, si jeune, entraîné malgré lui! Ah! cet affreux Paris!... Toutes les tentations, si fortes, de la grande ville... Ces dix mille francs, il fallait qu'il en eût eu bien besoin... Une dette? Qui sait, un service peut-être?... Et cet argent, après tout, un jour ce serait le sien... Et puis, il avait tant de remords, tant de peine. Sa lettre était si touchante! Il demandait pardon avec tant de cœur!... Mais de toutes ces pensées Mme Muglin ne laissait rien voir sur son pauvre visage bouleversé. Elle essuya ses larmes, et, courbant le front, elle recompta ses points.

M. Muglin, qui, d'un tisonnier saccadé, fourgonnait le feu, tout en observant sa femme, s'écria:

— Tu as beau faire, je vois ce que tu penses!... C'est du propre! Voilà où nous en sommes!... Quelle époque, mon Dieu! Les enfants, à présent, ne respectent plus rien... Conscience, délicatesse, honneur, c'est fini, tout s'en va.

Ainsi M. Muglin, gémissant, poursuivait l'ordinaire lamentation des pères qui vieillissent et dont, par une loi même de nature, les fils grandissants se détachent. Il souffrait dans sa probité d'ancien fonctionnaire irré-

prochable, mais il souffrait surtout dans son sentiment profond de la famille, dans son respect de l'ordre et de la hiérarchie; il souffrait aussi dans sa conception de l'honneur, conception modifiée, devenue plus sévère avec l'âge. Et ces souffrances-là étaient plus vives peut-être encore que celle qui lui jetait à la face des bouffées de sang et de fureur, à l'idée de la lettre de change forcée, du vilain coup imprévu des dix mille francs. M. Muglin était si troublé qu'il ne remarqua pas l'étrange, le persistant regard que levaient maintenant sur lui les beaux yeux étonnés de sa sœur.

Il se remit à tisonner, et dans l'écroulement des braises étincelantes, dans la forme dansante des flammes, ce qu'il voyait, ce n'était point lui-même tel qu'il était jadis et tel qu'il était aujourd'hui, c'était son fils, cet homme qui, fait de sa propre chair, lui était à la fois si proche et si profondément étranger. Il ne songeait pas au jeune homme, au fils que, lui-même, autrefois, il avait pu être, ni à cette divergence secrète qui l'avait à son heure éloigné de son père. Il ne songeait pas à d'autres événements que cette heure, par une sorte d'inflexible et impérieux retour, eût dû pourtant lui rappeler.

A quarante ans de distance, le hasard—ou le destin?—lui présentait, afin qu'il l'acquittât, cette même lettre de change qu'étudiant, en un jour de folie, il avait lui aussi tirée sur la bourse paternelle, et que son fils, à son tour, venait de tirer sur lui. Mais, tel est le jeu changeant des illusions qui nous mènent, M. Muglin, dans la forte vertu de sa vieillesse, dans sa certitude présente, ne se souvenait plus de son erreur passée...

— Il est si jeune! murmura d'un ton suppliant la mère.

— Jeune! jeune! protesta le père, est-ce que cela enlève rien à sa faute? Jeune!

Il y eut un court silence, qu'Hortense rompit:

— Ma parole, on dirait que tu ne l'as jamais été!

Le ton fut si dur que M. Muglin, in-

terdit, consulta sa sœur d'un long regard. Et tout le passé, d'un coup, ressuscita. Jusqu'au fond du cœur, il ressentit l'affront, revit la scène tragique, son père brandissant le billet impayé, Hortense donnant les pauvres cinq mille francs personnels, le seul argent qu'elle possédât...

Il baissa la tête, frappé par l'éton-

nante revanche des choses, cette espèce de compensation obscure:

— Alors, balbutia-t-il, cette lettre de change? A ma place...

Anxieuse, Mme Muglin, inconsciente du court drame intime, attendait, l'aiguille suspendue. La voix grave, Hortense prononça, comme un arrêt:

— A ta place?... Je paierais.



THE LOVERS

THE sky above was tender blue,
And golden was the weather,
When down a path a foolish two
Went strolling on together.
Her little hand in his was tight
(With boldness well amazing),
And thus they sauntered, full in sight,
And every one a-gazing!

It matters not of things they talked
Prosaic, ordinary;
The fact was patent that they *walked*
A different language—very!
Perhaps, because their heads were turned,
They deemed themselves sequestered,
And thought they could not be discerned,
And by rude glances pestered.

"How silly!" laughed the grass and breeze—
And kissed each other over;
"How silly!" scoffed the honey-bees—
And straight caressed the clover;
"How silly!" piped the feathered tribe—
And fell to billing sweetly;
"How silly!" quoth we all, in gibe—
And envied them, completely!

EDWIN L. SABIN.



A GOLD BRICK

MADGE—Did you ever hear of a person making a present of anything second-hand?

MARJORIE—Why, isn't Dolly giving Charley her heart for Christmas?

ABOUT THE TIDE OF CHRISTMAS

ABOUT the tide of Christmas,
 When winds make stormy stir,
 And Marjory a-tripping goes,
 Enrobed in dainty fur,
 Then it's O leap up, leap up, my heart,
 As gay as words that rhyme,
 For, haply, she will trip with thee
 The dance this Christmas-time!

About the tide of Christmas,
 When no wood-warblers sing,
 Then Marjory a-lilting goes
 The lyric call of Spring;
 So it's O cheer up, cheer up, my heart,
 To dream of Love's own clime,
 For, haply, she will sing to thee
 Love's song this Christmas-time!

About the tide of Christmas,
 When earth is sere and sad,
 Then Marjory a-smiling goes
 As though her soul were glad;
 So it's O tune up, tune up, my heart,
 Like bells of bliss a-chime,
 For, haply, she will smile on thee
 Love's smile this Christmas-time!

About the tide of Christmas,
 Though voices faint or fall,
 Still Marjory a-merrying goes,
 A charm to one and all;
 So it's O pluck up, pluck up, my heart,
 The hill of courage climb,
 For, haply, she will say to thee
 Love's "yes" this Christmas-time!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



HEARD IN BIBLE TIMES

"HOW old is she?"
 "She's four hundred, if she's a day; but she claims to be only two hundred."

HEARD ON THE BEACH

By May Isabel Fisk

WELL, my dear, I have been watching your bath-house for the last hour. I thought you were *never* coming out. It takes you so long to dress—but, then, it pays, for any one could tell the amount of time you spend on your toilettes—it shows. . . . If you don't mind—you are blushing just a little too much on your left cheek. . . . Take my handkerchief. . . . Sunburn? Oh, yes, but how convenient!—it rubs off!

. . . . Sleep last night? I don't think I closed my eyes ten minutes the entire night. When I am once disturbed I cannot get to sleep again. . . . Thunderstorm? Why, no, there wasn't. . . . Well, that just annoys me. I shall ask Mr. Randall why he didn't wake me up—he knows I simply cannot sleep through a thunderstorm. . . . Oh, no, I didn't tell you what disturbed me in the first place. . . . Indeed, I'm not going to tell. . . . No, I won't. . . . No, I will not. . . . Well, if you won't repeat it as coming from me. . . . You know, my room opens right on the piazza, the corner that's so dark at night, round by the dining-room. And, do you know, they begin to rattle those dishes at five o'clock in the morning! Perfectly senseless—I really believe they hire some one to bang them around just to annoy the guests. . . . Yes, I do. Where did I leave off? Oh, yes! I hadn't been in bed five minutes, and was so tired out and sleepy after rubbing in my flesh food. . . . My dear, why don't you use Madame Muller's preparations? You would look like a dif-

ferent woman. You would get rid of all those little lines about your eyes. I use them all, the food and the cleaner, and the bleach and the Perennial Youth Lotion, and the electric wrinkle-roller. There isn't a thing that roller won't do. If you have a double chin, it will rub it right off; and, if you are thin, it will rub it right on!

Of course, I don't need any of these things at all, but I use them in case some day I might want them. I must give you her address. . . . It was rather peculiar how I came to go to her. It was one of the coldest days last Winter, and I was in a drug-store drinking ice-cream soda. . . . Do you? I always take chocolate. Well, I saw a bottle of that Perennial Youth Lotion on the counter, and the picture of the woman on the advertisement looked so well, I took the address and went straight down to Madame Muller's studio. They have the most wonderful before-and-after woman you ever saw! You go into this little room, and there she sits, a mass of wrinkles and the color of saffron. Then you go out, and they shut the door and give her a treatment with all the preparations. . . . No, you don't see it, but you wait, and in about fifteen minutes they open the door again, and you go in and examine her. Well, my dear, there she sits in the same chair, dressed in the most stunning evening gown, holding a rose in her hand, and a palm on a table by her, and every wrinkle gone! You would never believe it was the same woman. . . . Well, it was; for when you first see her, she has a mole on her chin, and then when you see her after the treatment the mole is

gone! That fixed me, and I've used those preparations ever since. I went down there three days in succession, and saw the same performance every time.

Where did I leave off? Oh, yes! I'd just gone to bed, and was so sleepy, when I heard voices and then chairs dragged beneath my window. You may believe I was wide awake then, and got right up—not to listen, of course, but I wanted to hear what they said. I recognized the voices—that Bradley girl and young Wheatley. Mind you, two people, and I heard one rocking-chair rock—one chair, and two people! Of course, I'd be the last one to say a word or even hint a thing against Minnie Bradley—she is such a very nice girl. I don't like her at all, but she's a nice girl. Still, that one rocking-chair. . . . There might have been a plain chair, but I didn't hear it!

Oh, do you like it? It's nothing but an old rag—I didn't bring any of my good clothes this Summer. I knew just the common sort of people we would meet here—I don't know where on earth they come from. . . . My dear, I didn't mean you—the idea! The whole place is so badly managed—the house just seems to run itself. I came only on Mr. Randall's account—it's so near the city, and he can go in and out every day, and the children like it. Why, where are they? Come here! Where have you been? . . . Mud-pies? Well, I should think so—just look at your faces! . . . You want mama to take you bathing? No, the water is too cold. . . . Oh, Georgie Smith's nurse will take you? All right, you can go. Tell her to undress you and dress you, and then take you in to luncheon, and then to bring you back to the beach in the afternoon. . . . Run along, my darlings. No, you are too dirty to kiss. . . . I tell you, children are a care. No, I haven't a nurse this year. It's not a matter of expense, you know, but somehow, in the Summer, I don't care for a nurse. I just let them run wild—I think it's healthier.

Yes, that's Mrs. Gregory. She was divorced from her first husband, and now she is trying to catch another man. . . . Do you really? I don't see how you can say so; she hasn't a single good feature. . . . Her figure? Well, I wish you could have seen her before she had so much of it rubbed off—she was a sight! I know all about her. You see, we have the same masseuse—a Frenchwoman. She's perfectly splendid—Miss O'Grady. . . . Well, I don't know, she says she's French. Miss O'Grady said she rubbed at least twenty-five pounds off that woman last Winter. It came from drink! . . . I didn't exactly hear about it—I found it out. You see, when Miss O'Grady told me about Mrs. Gregory getting stouter, I said probably it came from drink—I saw her take a cocktail at a luncheon where we both were. . . . Yes, I did, too; it seemed so rude to refuse—and Miss O'Grady said without doubt that was it. So, that is how I came to know. Awful for a woman, isn't it? I don't know what the men see in her, anyway. Now, Mr. Randall admires her very much, but I don't know why, for certainly that woman doesn't resemble me in the least!

Good morning, Miss Walton. You are looking as charming as ever. . . . Yes, you do—you always do. . . . Isn't she a fright? They say her father gambles. I don't know how true it is, but I believe it, just the same. I don't like her, at all. . . . Do you honestly think she dresses well? She had that gown last Summer—we were at the same place. She's got new insertion on it, and a different color under it, but I recognized it the first time she had it on here. You can't fool me on made-over clothes. Of course, I never wear them myself. . . . Did you ever see such a house as ours for gossip? . . . I always hold that if you cannot say something good about anybody, don't say anything at all. Oh, look! There go the bride and groom. Did you ever see such a bathing-suit? Red flannel, trimmed with Autumn leaves!

I think at least she might have had orange blossoms. Don't they just make you ill with all that billing and cooing? Now, they are precisely the kind that will go on forever like that. Sickening! They have the cheapest room in the house. . . . Well, they have—I asked the clerk. Why, it's right next to yours! . . . A quarrel? . . . You heard it through the transom? Tell me all about it. . . . What did he say when she threw the soap-dish at him? . . . That's just it—when you see a couple so devoted, I always say, trouble isn't a hundred miles away.

. . . Yes, that horrid Mrs. Graham—I can't bear her. She always has a string of young men running after her. I shouldn't think her husband would allow it. There has been a good deal of talk about him, too. I imagine there will be some sort of a scandal before long. I am always suspicious of people till I find them out.

. . . The entertainment to-night? No, I sha'n't go—I think it is simply ridiculous, charging fifty cents admission. . . . I know it's for charity, but why don't they make those on the programme pay? I'd like to know what they would do if they didn't have an audience to listen to them. Of course it isn't the money. It isn't that—but I don't like the idea of paying. It makes me feel—well, funny. Besides, Mr. Randall is so tired out when he gets here at night he can't stand up—at least, he says he is, but he will go down in that old billiard-room and walk miles around that table; and insists it rests him

more than sitting quietly on the piazza talking to me! Men are queer.

. . . Shoots up, and then down, and then across? You should never have gone in the water with it. . . . Sciatica, my dear. I had a woman who used to sew for me, and she suffered terribly. It was the most pitiful sight to see her sewing from half-past seven in the morning till half-past six at night. . . . Oh, I make them come early. . . . Well, it got so bad she finally had to sit with one leg stretched out in a chair, and then it went into her teeth, and then, when it went into the other, and she had to have them all out—I could not stand it; I am so sympathetic—and I told her if she starved to death, I could not employ her any longer. . . . She finally died of it.

. . . My dear, I didn't mean to make you nervous—perhaps you will get over it—I certainly hope so; but your symptoms are precisely like hers.

. . . Now, there was a certain liniment she used to use—it never did her a bit of good, but you might like to try it. I think I can find out the name—I have her sister's address. It is somewhere in Brooklyn. You see, she lived with her sister, and when she died she was owing me a half-day's work, and I went right over to see her about it. I'll write immediately after luncheon.

. . . My, you are in a hurry! I suppose you are going to dress again for luncheon. . . . I don't know what I should do here without you, you dear thing. . . . Good-bye; good-bye. . . . She is the hatefulest cat in the whole place!



THE RETORT CAUSTIC

THE DOG—Feeling pretty blue?

THE TURKEY—You needn't talk. I'd rather be stuffed than a sausage, any day.

UNPRACTISED PREACHMENTS

ONE can at least be silent, since speech is a useless thing;
 One can at least be quiet, since action can lead nowhere,
 And the uttermost of its gain is less than the years will bring
 To the man who dreams at ease, and who does not care.

And if, perhaps, he has loved, he has kept it out of a poem
 Nor sold her smile for a song, nor bartered her sacred eyes;
 Or if he happen to worship some page of a tattered tome,
 You never shall find him out while his lips have lies.

Or if in his heart he harbors some heaven of high desire,
 He knows that the stars are lifted so far from his touch and sight
 That the utmost a man can have is the light from a long-dead fire,
 Still traveling the upper dark of a Summer night.

For this man keeps his soul, and to keep is a harder thing
 Than to loosen and let it fly to spaces beyond his ken,
 Or to blunder and let it fall, with broken, quivering wing,
 Down under the aimless feet of a mob of men.

FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



CIRCULATED

A TALE OF A HAT

ESTHER (*to CLARA*)—Helen's new hat is perfectly hideous, but I wouldn't for worlds let her know I think so.

AN HOUR LATER

CLARA (*to HELEN*)—Esther doesn't like your hat; she says it is a fright. But don't say I told you.

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY

HELEN (*fire in her eyes, to ESTHER*)—Clara says you think my hat a fright. Every one else says it is p-e-r-fectly lovely. I never did admire *your* taste.

A LITTLE LATER

ESTHER (*to CLARA*)—How contemptible of you to repeat my remark about Helen's hat! I'll never forgive you.

SOON AFTER

CLARA (*to HELEN*)—How mean of you to tell Esther I had told you what she said about your hat! I do detest ingratitude!

(NOT THE END.)

THE VILLAIN OF THE PIECE

By Louise Betts Edwards

IT certainly was a good story. Even its truth was unable to spoil it.

Estelle Romaine, aged twenty-five, and cursed with the gift of the pen, ever since she had abandoned the uncertain gains of journalism for the certain losses of pure literature, had been tormented by those beaming friends who "find stories" for writers. Sometimes they unearthed them from "real life," as they impressively announced; sometimes they evolved them from their own fearful and wonderful brains, but "hadn't your talent for elaborating them," as they ingenuously confessed; sometimes, Estelle was firmly convinced, they dreamed them. They were always hopeless—the stories, not the friends. But here, now, was a good one, which for certain reasons impressed her most singularly and strongly; and—she ought not to use it.

"Yes, I ought. No, I ought not." Like two spiteful katydids the two impulses in her mind hissed retorts back and forth, until she was nearly frantic, and wished that Theodosia Hall, her closest friend, who had told her the story, had never been born; or, at least, had not interrupted herself, at a dramatic point in the telling, with the fatal exclamation:

"Why, you know the man! You have met Warren Kane, haven't you?"

She would not wish to meet him again, after the story had appeared in bold print, signed by her name! Pshaw! how absurd to count unhatched chickens! Doubtless, the tale would never see the light. Moreover, every one had heard it—"with or

without the name," said Theodosia, who, in her more intimate circle was known as "Tod" Hall.

Estelle had written it down exactly as she had heard it from Tod's lips, and then sat and unhappily regarded it, wishing, oh, so fervently, that she did not know the man.

It was a curious story, one of life's unfinished episodes, in which she had laid on the melodramatic colors thick and crude, with absolute disregard of any three or thirty-nine unities.

"It will interest *you*, Estelle," began Tod, in her quick, funny, breathless way, "because the man is a journalist—or was. He isn't much of anything now. But, ten years or so ago, there must have been something very nice about him, for he took the fancy not only of an English nobleman who found him drifting penniless about London, but of—well, that part comes later."

"Let me not anticipate," Tod," drawled Estelle, who was lying in indolent comfort on the lounge, with billows of cushions muffling her ears. She was not listening very closely.

"Estelle, wake up! Haven't I told you it is a splendid story for a writer, and every word *true*? This English earl I'm telling you about invited the journalist to visit him at his castle, where he had one of the prettiest sisters, and finest and most famous picture-galleries, in the United Kingdom. The pictures were chiefly inherited from his grandfather, a noted art collector, for the present earl was too poor to buy anything, and at the same time too great to sell anything—you know how things are over there.

Offers had been made every now and then by foreign museums to purchase the pictures, and it would be hard to tell which they made the more indignant—the earl or the British public, who would deluge the *Times* with letters about ‘the association of that historic name with those historic pictures,’ and so forth.”

She went on to relate that, during the American journalist’s stay at the ancestral castle, he wrote a long and enthusiastic account of the picture-gallery for an American newspaper. In other respects, however, he made but an indifferent return for hospitality, not only falling in love with his host’s seventeen-year-old sister, “which was bad enough in itself,” commented Miss Hall, with deep sympathy for aristocratic sensibilities, but—

“He actually tried to elope with her!” cried Theodosia, striking her palms together dramatically. “Her family were arranging a match for her with a certain rich Mr.—something that begins with an H—but she didn’t care, and the American didn’t care. They were caught, and stopped, on the eve of the day he was to leave the castle and sail for America; and what do you suppose brought about the discovery? Why, the castle was entered by burglars, who came to carry off the celebrated paintings, with a line of covered wagons waiting outside to receive them! Wasn’t it a bold scheme? But they found an unbolted door in the castle”—she noted with triumph that Estelle began to raise herself from the cushions and look interested—“gagged and bound every servant who resisted, and to-day those paintings would be scattered all over Europe and America if young Lady—oh, dear, I’ve forgotten her name, too!—had not been up and around to scream, and so awaken her brother.

“Estelle, he was so furious at the American that he did something dreadful—horsewhipped him, or dropped him in the moat—oh, have castles stopped having moats? Very

well, he did something. Nobody knows what it was.

“When the burglars, hearing the alarm raised, took to their heels, and the servants—those that were not bound—wanted to pursue them, ‘Let those rogues go,’ he said; ‘I’ve a greater one here.’”

“Were the thieves never caught?” asked Estelle.

“Never. But an account of the burglary leaked into the papers, which dwelt on the sudden disappearance of the young American, suggested that he was admittedly in desperate straits of poverty, and belonged to ‘that class unburdened by scruples, known as Yankee journalists,’ and—well, hinted pretty plainly that he might not be altogether unconnected with the affair. When this reached the eyes of the journalist, by this time safe on his own side of the Atlantic, he published an angry letter in an American newspaper, impudently accusing the earl himself of planning the robbery as a means of selling the pictures without incurring public odium. Of course, the nobleman preferred a libel suit against the newspaper. It never came off, however, for the earl died suddenly. The queer part of the story is that for years no one knew positively who the journalist was, and even now, though known, his identity has never been publicly revealed. He wrote and traveled under a pen-name, and the newspaper prosecuted by the earl obstinately refused to disclose the secret.”

“Is that all?” asked Estelle.

“All? how much do you want?” asked Miss Hall, scornfully. “I never saw anything like you writers.”

“It’s very interesting, for truth,” Estelle said, doubtfully. “But for fiction, it strikes me as incomplete.”

“Good gracious! what are writers for? Make an ending, of course, and send the thing at once to *The Axis*. I could almost do it myself. Oh, there is one fact I have left out, and it’s rather romantic. After the earl died, the American wrote to England, asking the girl to marry him, but she

had come to her senses by then, and married the Englishman with the H in his name. And, oh, one thing more! Estelle, you know the hero—or villain, rather—of the piece. Haven't you met Warren Kane?"

"I wish to heaven, Tod," said Estelle, laying down the paper and pencil with which she had been jotting down notes, and folding her hands in her lap, "that since you have forgotten so many other names, you had forgotten his, too. Of course, I know him. How could I ever write the thing now? And," mournfully, "it was just beginning to attract me."

"Stuff and nonsense! Do you know the man half so well as every one knows the story?"

True; Estelle's acquaintance with Warren Kane was of the briefest. She had been introduced to him at a picture-gallery, met him again for a few moments in a theatre box, and at a recent dinner-party he had taken her out and spoken rather nicely of some work he had seen signed by her.

He did not seem quite like the "hero—or villain" of such a melodrama, but, then, one never knows people until—one does know them. She had rather disliked him, not for any criminal tendencies she had observed in him, but for the more vital offense of being a bore. A thin, long, melancholy, almost middle-aged face, a drawling, hesitating voice, and a personality insensible, almost insensate, to feminine attractions, are scarcely passports to the favor of Sweet-and-Twenty. He seemed the last person in the world to connect with journalism, though Estelle had heard that he did write a little now and then. By profession he was a dawdler, living—somewhat meagerly, it was believed—on a small property recently inherited. No one seemed to know very much about Warren Kane. Estelle wished she knew much less than she did.

"Tod," she went back to that tempter and asked, "how do you know Warren Kane is the man?"

"From an editor who was on the

newspaper that published the libel on the earl. He told papa, before me. All things leak out for those that will but wait."

"Then I won't write the thing," decided Estelle, miserably, pushing away a paper on which she had already scribbled:

"These are the paintings," said the Englishman, with a flush of pride. A deeper flush stood on the cheek of his lovely sister Adela."

"Suppose her name *should* just happen to be Adela?" thought Estelle, quite shocked at herself. "Instead—oh, dear, what shall I write instead?"

For Estelle was a comparative novice in fiction, and her ideas marshaled themselves but slowly. A few other fleeting inspirations came to her, and worked themselves out on paper into literary abominations of desolation, while Theodosia's story gained strength and richness and unity until it stood a vision with robust outlines and a seductive beckoning finger, and laughed derisively at her, "*Retro me, Sathana!*"

"You could call me Sarah, you know," suggested the apparition of her heroine, sitting familiarly at the distracted author's bedside—"Sarah with an H. Few members of the British nobility are so christened. How do you know that I mind being put in a story? How do you know I am not dead? How do you know—even supposing that a character like Mr. Kane has any rights which you are bound to respect—that he ever reads *The Axis*?"

True enough! And if a man will act dishonorably, and at the same time picturesquely, he does not deserve that struggling young writers, hungry for material, should regard his feelings. Probably he had no feelings. Another argument came forward, in a spirit of brotherly love and charity, to suggest that the story could be so altered, the incidents could be so worked over and transmogrified, that the chief characters could not recognize them.

The picture-gallery, for instance, should be a collection of rare gems; the journalist should be French, and

the nobleman a Russian; and Mr. Kane should have no opportunity of recognizing his lost lady under the title of Countess Olga. Quite nerved to desperation, Miss Romaine took a fat book on "The Land of the Tzars"—from which bulky tube she would squeeze her local color—under one arm, and her pencil-pad under the other. There was a tree by the lake in the Park, under which she did almost all her writing in the season when her little hall-room grew stuffy and warm.

In the early morning only a few stray children visited the Park. A big boy in knickerbockers lay on his stomach, feeding the ducks and swans and idly directing a small sail-boat's course with a stick and a string; otherwise, she had not only the tree-seat but the lake to herself.

Estelle scrawled down the words:

"Next to his sister, the Count Petronovitch most loved and valued his gems."

Then she scowled, and erased the lines. Across the big, uninspiring gray smear she wrote afresh, beginning:

"The Countess Olga, although seventeen, had not yet had a lover."

Nor had the lover yet been given a name. Every one has his attitude of meditation; Estelle's was to put both hands behind her back—a pose in which a vivacious Spring breeze has you at a disadvantage. In an instant, the sheet of paper was whisked off her knees, and sent merrily skimming into the water.

Had it been anything she valued, the long-legged boy would never, never have turned his head, risen nimbly to his feet, fished skilfully for the sheet with his stick, and finally brought it safe to port, clinging to the deck of his toy vessel.

"This is yours, I believe," lifting his cap. "Why, you are—excuse me, aren't you Miss Romaine?"

Of course she was Miss Romaine; who else, of all the people in the world, should Warren Kane, of all created beings, encounter the moment either of them went abroad for a sniff of

the fresh air of Spring? She would probably do nothing else but meet Mr. Kane for the remainder of her mortal days, unless she let Countess Olga drown safely in the lake.

"I hope the page has come to no harm," he continued. "Many writers dilute their work even more; why, there is probably material left in the lake for a dozen realistic novels of the homeopathic school, just from the washings of your page."

"Nothing has been washed off, apparently," said Estelle, wishing it had been, before reaching his hands. Pshaw! what honorable man would read it? Exactly so—what honorable man?

For a breaker of pledges of hospitality and feminine hearts, not to mention the laws of *meum* and *tuum*, Mr. Kane looked particularly mild. His boyish cap and knickerbockers, for which the bicycle leaning against a near-by tree offered explanation, had something to do with it; but his melancholy, not wholly unyouthful face looked so guileless that Estelle began to repeat her question to Tod Hall, "How do you know it is Warren Kane?"

"You will keep my secret, will you not, Miss Romaine?" he asked, quite softly, and with a deprecating smile. Estelle gave a great start.

"I shouldn't care," he replied to her inquiring eyes, "to have the scoffing world made a spectator of my infantine pastimes. My only excuse is that the swans have come to insist that my pockets shall have cakes in them, and that a small boy, whose name I know no more than you do, asked me to keep his boat ashore, while he went to buy a taffy-on-a-stick. You can sail it a while, if you like," quite gravely.

"Thank you. It keeps my hands full paddling my own canoe."

"Ah, yes, your work!" sympathetically. "How does it prosper? Believe me, I try to keep an eye on it, and am always interested."

Mr. Kane's eye and his interest being just the things Estelle felt herself most

willing to dispense with, she hastily veered. "We have a beautiful Park here, have we not?" with intention.

"The most beautiful in the world," with conviction.

"Isn't Hyde Park in London prettier?"

"I do not know. I have never seen Hyde Park."

"There is something wrong somewhere," said Estelle to herself, as her pencil skimmed almost happily over the page. Mr. Kane would plainly have liked to linger and talk, had he received any encouragement, but this she had most unequivocally withheld. "It may be with Tod Hall, it may be with her father, or it may be with the man who told her father the story; but it is not with Mr. Kane. He did not know there were only a dozen words on that paper; he gave the little boy the money for that taffy-stick; and he never saw Hyde Park!"

Disdaining to admit that a man might be in London without visiting the Park, Estelle's relieved conscience gave wings to her pen, and the story was soon written. Having now no compunctions toward her hero, she implicated him in the attempted robbery, forced the Countess Olga to journey secretly into France to escape her noble lover and to bring herself and her forgiveness to the ignoble one, of whose name and whereabouts she knew little more than did Gilbert à'Becket's Turkish lady-love, who finally found him dead, frozen in the snows near the monastery of St. Bernard, whither he had betaken his racked conscience.

Estelle felt that the morality of the ending ought to atone for its sadness in the eyes of the editor of *The Axis*. Blithely setting forth with the packet to the post-office, she of course ran against Kane. Her only wonder was that it had not happened sooner.

"Mr. Kane," she inquired, seized with sudden misgivings, "do you ever see *The Axis*?"

"Not often." Whereat her heart leaped. "My business leaves me small time for reading." Estelle wondered

a little what his business might be. "I *will* read it, though, if your work appears there."

"No, no!" trapped in her own pit. "I never write for it; I never had a line there in my life!"

"But you may some day," encouragingly.

"Yes, I may," owned Estelle, with deep inward grief. Her conscience would not let her add, "But it's very unlikely."

"Now that man will buy *The Axis* and read it every month," mused Estelle, unhappily, screwing her elbows into the desk at the post-office; a slightly self-complacent conclusion, but one partly warranted by the solicitous manner in which Mr. Kane piloted her through crowds, the attention with which he hung upon her utterances, and the fervor of his expressed wish to see her soon again, which she assured him would undoubtedly come to pass. So far from boring her, the man had now come to interest her, as one over whom a cloud of mystery hung. While one might have a social acquaintance of years with a man and not know whether or not he would steal a gallery of pictures, or the sister of an earl, if confronted with the opportunity, yet surely there would be some cynic speech, some meanness of thought or action, some unguarded exposure of the hidden coarseness of fiber, to denote the inward corruptness of principle. All this—all, in fact, which may not become a man—seemed lacking in Kane; yet he *had* been in England—an inadvertent word, which he seemed anxious to recall, told her that; his life of voluntary retirement, his broken fortunes, the chronic dejection of his face and manner, seemed inexplicable in a man who dared to live his life in the open day.

Estelle sighed profoundly. Then, with lingering pen, she crossed out the address on the plump envelope containing her story, and directed it to *The Modern*. She would not take risks. Still, she hoped that to the editor of that eminently twentieth-

century periodical, the end might be so tragic as to excuse its morality.

Apparently it was not, for in what she considered undue time the story returned to her, accompanied by one of those little printed letters which are so mercilessly polite. Estelle ground her teeth, and despatched the story to *The Pole-Star*, an old, conservative publication, whence it winged its way back, with a letter signed by the editor. "The story is well written," she was informed, "but rings false—false to human nature and the facts of life. The element of probability is lacking. We believe the writer will think better of publishing it if she puts it away for a while."

Put it away for a while! The Ancient Mariner with the fatal albatross around his neck was no more hampered than Estelle, so long as this wretched tale weighted her mind. There was no other inspiration until it was disposed of; no way but one of putting it from her; and no magazine left her but *The Axis*. With a shadowy smile at the expense of *The Pole-Star's* editor—little he knew!—she despatched her incubus to the former magazine, and then waited to see it published and to meet Warren Kane. Both were events she was sure of; nevertheless, when they really occurred, treading close on each other's heels, she found herself in the grasp of a terror which put her in the position of a criminal brought to judgment.

"You'll keep my secret?"

His grave, trustful eyes, when he asked that question; her implied consent; his shy overtures of friendship; her again implied acceptance of them—oh, it was intolerable! She was too distressed to reason on the inconsistency of her remorse for what was no betrayal unless the man himself were a traitor; she knew nothing, save that her hour of reckoning had come.

Yet his manner—the occasion was one of the rare, very rare social gatherings where his face might be seen—somewhat tranquillized her fears. Had he read and recognized the story,

would he not avoid her, never wish to speak to her again? Instead, he seemed as anxious as ever to speak to her, though opportunity did not come until after dinner. The most fatal thing, she thought, determinedly, would be to show embarrassment; so she welcomed him with a somewhat forced radiance.

But he did not sit down. "I must go soon," he said. Then, without preamble, and without showing any excitement, "I read your story about me in *The Axis*."

What was it she had been so sure of? His guilt? No, it was his innocence! She had not betrayed him so much as he had betrayed her. Springing to her feet, in one swift instant transferred from the rôle of defendant to that of judge, such uncontrollable pain, dismay, disappointment, cried out through her eyes, that he smiled ironically, and continued: "This," with a glance around, and moving his body so as to screen her, "is not the place to say very much about it, save one thing in justice to myself. It is not a true story. I told you so, you remember."

His smile was cold, without resentment. Something about it made Estelle realize with a choking sorrow that she valued this man's friendship above any other, and that she had lost it. But how?

"You were the editor of *The Pole-Star*?" she murmured.

He bowed. "But it is not to be known."

"I can keep *that*!" exclaimed Estelle, her face fiercely flaming.

"Have you stopped writing in the Park? You know what you know; I would rather you heard what you don't know."

"Come to my house," said Estelle. It was impossible to say more—or less.

"In the first place," Kane began, abruptly, having availed himself of that invitation, the next day, "I'm an honest man. I don't expect to rehabilitate myself, because there are

parts of the story I can't tell you." Instinctively Estelle thought of the dreadful unknown punishment meted out by the angered Englishman, and shuddered. "In fact, I'm not going to tell you any story. Only believe this: I never abused any man's hospitality. My errand to the earl's place was purely business, not social; he wanted me to write up his picture-gallery for American newspapers, and I did it. Our relation was that of employer and employee; he did not"—with a faint twist of the mouth—"invite me even to his table. I did not plan to rob him—"

"Oh," imploringly, "please don't think I believed that!"

"Enough people have believed it," quietly, "to spoil my life. I was sorry I wrote that letter denying it, though I told the truth. The earl had once invited me to use my Yankee wits on some scheme for him to sell the pictures under the rose—he wanted the money for his sister's dowry—and himself suggested a pseudo-robbery. My article was written and printed before I knew what he wanted it for—an advertisement. He didn't expect then to give me provocation to expose him."

"But why didn't you expose him more?" indignantly. "Why did you not clear your name, whether he died or lived, by telling the whole truth?"

A dark, painful red dyed the man's face. "For Lady Laura's sake." He spoke in his old, almost inaudible tone. "I wanted no more publicity."

So she was a Laura! Estelle had never liked that name. Yet he must have liked it and its owner, to blush so over its ten-year-old memory. A wave of pity for the one episode he had not attempted to touch on or excuse—the intended elopement—swept over the girl. In a moment she saw that closed page unrolled; she saw the one divine folly of a love too ambitious, expiated by years of suffering, by loss of love, of name, of fame. Her soul rose up against that faithless English girl. "She should have married you!" she

exclaimed, astounded at her own temerity.

The flush darkened and spread. "She should have married—whom she chose to marry," he said, quickly. "Maybe she never received that letter. A girl there is in her relatives' hands. She may want me some day again."

"The queen can do no wrong!" thought Estelle, hanging her head in shame that she had thought she knew this man. In her injustice, her wild guesses at the secret of his life, she had believed him capable of anything, save sacrificing his career to a quibble of honor, his life to an inconstant love. "Oh!" the tears springing to her eyes, as he moved toward the door, "you'll break my heart with your goodness! You never even asked me not to tell this."

"I did not need to," said Kane, more quietly than ever. She wondered if he would ever come to see her again.

He came, but not very often. While free from coxcombry, his manner showed the guarded appreciation of a man who is not for women—or is for one woman only. "She may need him some day!" thought Estelle, hoping that Lady Laura Hawkhurst was worth such devotion. She had heard that lady's name through a most disquieting source, namely, a letter with English stamps, addressed to "E. Romaine, care of the Editor of *The Axis*," a most amazing letter with the most amazing signature, "L. Hawkhurst."

It plunged immediately into its subject—and object. Since the author of the recent story in *The Axis* must know the true name of a personage whom she introduced under the disguise of a French journalist, would she not furnish her correspondent with the same, together with his address?—the excuse for such a request being that "although I never knew his real name, he has touched my life so nearly that I have been trying for many years to discover and open communication with him."

The inevitable feminine manifestation known as the postscript followed:

"P. S.—It might be best to address me simply as H. Hurst, in care of the general delivery at the London post-office.

"P. S. No. 2.—Do not imagine this a trap to entangle your friend or acquaintance in that old accusation against him. I have learned the truth about the attempted burglary, and you need not fear to furnish his address."

Nevertheless, Estelle feared greatly to furnish the address. For whom the fear was, she did not define to herself. The course of events was supplying a better ending to the romance than her bungling fiction. Lady Laura was now free, and her heart, long cold and dormant, had gone out toward the old lover who had borne so much for her, and Estelle had a chance to expiate her own wrong to Warren Kane by acting as a *dea ex machina*. Should she send or show the letter to him? No; better let the joyful surprise come to him directly—and a month later.

She wrote to "H. Hurst," enclosing Kane's name and address, after which she had an empty feeling of having given, sold or lost him out of her life. A letter came back with many thanks, yet adding:

"I was especially anxious to know where to find Mr. Kane, in view of a trip I am shortly to take through the States. As I fear he might refuse to see me if I called on him, would it be too much to ask if you might arrange a meeting at your house? I will wire you when I shall be in your city."

Did she not owe it all to him—and more? The *dea ex machina* somewhat sadly consented, with a foreboding of coming disaster pressing insistently upon her. Had she a right to subject him to such a shock? She had heard of men being killed by joy. It would kill her, she felt, to see him die—and of joy!

However she might lead the conversation, he would never talk of Lady Laura. How fortunate—how dreadful—if he had forgotten her! In desperation she asked him, point-blank.

"No," he said, with agitation. "I could not forget her."

"She is coming to see you," said Estelle, calmly.

He started violently, the dark color

flooding his face. "To see me? When? You're dreaming, Miss Romaine!"

She told him all, while his eyes dilated with a horror she could not understand.

"But, Miss Romaine," he interrupted her, with consternation, "Lady Laura's husband is *not* dead!"

There was a short, alarmed silence, while Estelle's brain reeled and sickened with the swift panoramic changes of this intricate affair, which only unrolled more fully that it might present a more incomprehensible puzzle. Not dead? that woman not free? But, alas! was not this man forever bound, in his own eyes?

"I wish," said Kane, uneasily, "I had not told you that. After all she's borne for me!" his voice sank. "There must be some explanation," with stubborn loyalty that stirred her into a fever of admiration. "Let me see the letters."

As he read, his look of shocked surprise changed into a certain weary indifference. "I might have guessed," he said, laying them down; "Leonard, not Laura Hawkhurst. How could you think it a woman's hand? I think I see; I've heard of his as a jealous nature; probably he has been tormenting that poor girl all these years to know the details of that horrible night."

"Oh, what have I done this time!" Estelle's face was hidden in her hands.

"Dear, nothing so dreadful. Don't let me see you cry!" His lips, quivering with tense emotion, his hands, held rigidly back from temptation, offered her no tenderness; it was that which overflowed in his voice, in his somber, yet glowing, eyes, that forced from her one sharp sentence:

"I thought you loved her as well as ever!"

"As well as ever!" he returned, with eyes blazing into hers a truth so simple, so overwhelming, that it seemed sheer madness for her never to have thought of it before. Without another word, he turned abruptly and left the house.

She did not see him again until the curt telegram came from Lady Laura's

husband, giving the day and hour when he would be at her house. She did not dream of intruding on the interview, but started when she heard two voices, instead of one, in the room where Kane had been moodily waiting—and one of them a woman's! "She, too!" she thought. A servant came up with the message that it was Lady Laura's wish that her hostess should be present.

All resentment, jealousy, and other half-evil and wholly human emotions, died out of Estelle's heart at the sight of the pale, trembling girl, little older than herself, who clung to her husband's arm, partly in appeal, partly for strength. It was no moment for formalities. Ignoring her advent, Lord Hawkhurst turned violently to the other man.

"Curse you," he said, "can't you lie to save a woman?" His lip quivered, childishly; the petulance and the anguish, both, of a fond, weak, jealous heart trembled in his tones.

Kane gravely inclined his head. "I can, but there is no need. I repeat that Lady Laura has told you the truth, and nothing else, as to our relations ten years ago. If you cannot believe her—and me—so much the worse for your own peace."

"The whole truth?" asked Hawkhurst, waveringly.

Lady Laura raised her head with a gasp. "Tell him the whole truth," she said to Kane. "I cannot bear this; I should have told him myself, had I known I was to be brought here."

Kane shrank back. "I can't," he said, with that painful blush of his.

"Then I will." Hawkhurst's wife loosed his arm and faced him. "The whole truth is," she said, distinctly, "that Mr. Kane never loved me for one moment in his life. I threw myself at his head. I was very young, and, I suppose, very forward; and—well, I won't try to excuse myself. I resolved he should not return to America without me. I came to him, all prepared for the journey, and begged him to take me——"

"Don't!" cried Kane.

"—begged him to marry me," she continued, self-pitilessly. "It was the sort of madness the world forgives boys every day, but girls never. Have I humiliated myself sufficiently?" to Lord Hawkhurst. Her eyes burned. "One thing more I keep back. I will tell it if you require me"—Kane raised an imploring hand—"but after I had told, I would never look you or any other man or woman"—with a glance at Estelle—"in the face again. I swear there was no wrong in it. I think I have paid, in bitter enough coin, for my folly." She stood regarding Hawkhurst entreatingly; it was plain that it was he whom she loved to-day. Then she spoke again, less rapidly: "I did not answer Mr. Kane's letter offering himself, because—oh, because I was dying of pain and shame, and never wanted to see him again. I did not dream of his regarding himself as bound to me."

"How could I dream of being anything else?" said Kane, passionately.

Lord Hawkhurst looked uncertainly from his wife to Warren Kane. "Perhaps I have been—" he stammered, in an altered tone; then, as one stunned into humility, "I don't understand anything, dear," he said. "Come away; we'll try not to understand anything but each other."

Lady Laura, her hand drawn tightly through her husband's, looked back, as she passed out, from Kane to Estelle, with a mute message in her eyes. As though acting on it, he went to Estelle, bent, and, half-timidly, half-questioningly, without venturing to raise her hand, touched it with his lips.

She drew back. "I, too, understand nothing," she said. "You could not dream of anything save being bound to her!"

"Estelle, how could I help it, after—do you know what she went through for me? though not by my will, God knows! She gave me leave by her eyes to tell you. She could not tell her husband. You have heard of some awful punishment I received when the

earl discovered his sister and me in the act, as he supposed, of leaving the castle together?"

"Yes," in a whisper.

"Estelle, he laid no finger on me. The robbers had bound and gagged me, as the only man they met who was not under the earl's orders to offer no resistance. That was why she screamed for her brother, and when he saw her, in her traveling frock, plainly ready to go with me, he—" The narrator turned away with a shudder.

"Don't tell it, then," said Estelle, gently.

"I must finish. He—he horse-whipped her!" covering his face. "He struck her poor, tender, quivering body over and over again with his beastly whip, with her shrieks of pain and suffering sounding in my ears with

every lash, and I, tied and helpless, obliged to lie there and look on. After that, what could I do for a woman to whom I had been the cause, however innocent, of such treatment? what more, or less, than to hold myself at her service always, so long as there was the faintest possibility of her wanting me—though I did not love her, though I had come to love—some one else?"

"When," said Estelle, in a low voice, "shall I ever know you? All your generosity—" She stumbled, and recommenced: "Warren, you have borne a great deal from the women who have loved you!"

His eyes shone. She finished her sentence in his arms: "Will you bear a great deal more?"

"To the end of my days!" he answered.



AT THE GATES

THERE came to the gates that are high and wide

A man and a woman fair to see;
"Living and lost, or doomed and dead,"
(These were the words the woman said),
"Whither thou goest I follow thee."

And the man, as he bent to her lips' cool wine:
"We who are joined by the right divine,
Joined in heaven or hell shall be."

*But he who guarded the portals wide
Laughed—for he knew that the man had lied.*

Hand in hand to the threshold red,
Craven and culprit fair to see;
But one drew back. "For my soul's sake,"
(These were the words he faltering spake),
"Enter first, as thou lovest me."
She raised the latch, and her lips were flame;
"Mine the scorching and mine the shame;
Sweet is the cup which I drain for thee."

*The gates swung out with a mighty moan
As the woman, smiling, passed through—alone.*

MERIBAH PHILBRICK-REED.

HOW I LOST MY POST ON "THE LASH"

By Florence Warden

NOW, *The Lash* started, as everybody knows, as a very fiery little paper, speaking its mind freely about everything and everybody, and earning itself a distinct reputation for daring and boldness.

But a brace of actions for libel rather quenched its ardor, so that at the time I joined the staff as "interviewer of celebrities," it had settled down into the homely jog-trot of ordinary journalism, and I quite understood that I must dip my descriptive brush in very vivid rose-color.

I had "done" politicians and pugilists, acrobats and authors, lady-vocalists of the music-halls and distinguished philanthropists, when the editor of the paper was seized with illness, and his duties were temporarily fulfilled by the sub-editor, a meek-spirited, weak-eyed little man whom I could not bear, and who had, as I felt convinced, a sneaking jealousy and dislike of me.

I had just interviewed a particularly difficult subject, the rising young painter, Julius Jagwin, and had managed the business in what I knew to be a masterly manner, when, what was my amazement and disgust to be met by the sub-editor with the question whether I really wished my "interview" to be published as written.

I stared at the man, who avoided my eyes in his usual shuffling and shambling manner, and said that I certainly did mean my article to be printed exactly as I had written it, and that if any attempt were made to alter it I should resign my post on the paper.

I knew that this threat would bring him to reason, for *The Lash* depends,

in great measure, upon its interviews, which are always carefully illustrated; and although every man and every woman thinks this branch of journalism the easiest in the world, it is really one which demands the rarest qualities of discreet suppression of fact and able manipulation of fiction.

So he apologized for his suggestion, and disappeared into his office, which is the name we give to the cupboard where the old numbers of the paper are kept, and where means have been found to insert a chair and a writing-table between the piles of unappreciated literature.

I was simply boiling with indignation at the implied imputation put upon my abilities, and when I got home I took out of my desk the copy I had of the interview with the artist—for I always use a type-writer for composition and correspondence, and in the former case take a duplicate of my work—and proceeded to read it over carefully, to see whether I had left a loophole for unfavorable criticism.

But the more I read, the more convinced I became of the singular judgment and skill I had exercised in the matter.

I must premise that we always wrote the interviews in the form of letters, to give them a more homely and easy air. My interview ran as follows:

MY DEAR GEORGE:

One of the pleasantest excursions it has ever been my lot to enjoy has given a little zest to life since I saw you last. On Thursday, early in the afternoon, I quitted the luxurious Pullman car which had carried me down to Cranville, that loveliest spot on the Kentish coast, where nature in all her luxu-

riance of lofty cliff and spreading plain, sapphire sea and azure sky, combines with civilization in its highest form to ensure man's repose and delight.

A short but charming drive in brilliant sunshine tempered by a gentle breeze, brought me to the cozy nook on a little slope outside the town, where the distinguished and brilliant young artist, Julius Jagwin, has wisely fixed his residence.

Neither too far from the haunts of men for social enjoyment, nor too much exposed for comfort, the graceful and picturesque residence of the painter has been chosen with the eye of an artist, as well as the judgment of a man of the world.

Sheltered from the direct sea-breeze by the swelling slope of a green hillside, the tiny house stands nestling between a row of quaint little homes, of which it forms the last, and a caravansary of imposing extent, whose palatial dimensions serve but to increase the sense of cozy charm which envelops the artist's house, and seems to form about it an atmosphere of its own.

For, similar as the house is in its architecture and proportions to its neighbors, it yet stands out distinguished from the rest by many a subtle trait.

The tiny garden is not as the other gardens, the aspect of the windows is not as theirs.

A huge sunflower brightens the little space in front of the residence by a touch of vivid color, while the windows are softly draped, not in the conventional horror of curtains cream or white, but in some lightly clinging stuff of unaggressive and indeterminate hue, which well preludes the beauties of the interior.

An entrance-hall, hung picturesquely with draperies of Oriental hues, gives access to the one long, low room, brightened with windows at each end, and forms the chief feature, and the most delightful, of this charming abode.

By an ingenious arrangement, the apartment can be divided at will into two, and a table of massive oak at the one end, designed for the family repasts, contrasts agreeably with the lighter and less utilitarian furniture at the garden end of the long room.

Graceful draperies, antique chests, curious weapons, their austerity relieved by groups of tall palms and feathery fern, make the long, low room a paradise of soft tints and harmonious colorings; while the wife and daughter of the artist, gracious matron and slender maiden, lend the necessary touch of warm, breathing humanity to the picture, harmonious adjuncts, in clinging garments of tender tone, to the perfect whole.

Young as she is, the artist's daughter has already shown decided signs of inheriting some, at least, of her gifted father's genius; and, as she bends over her portfolio of sketches, modest and timid at hearing her

own praises, the aureole of Titianesque hair about her slender neck and delicate features helps to give a subtle suggestion of the most beautiful faces and figures in the pictures of Burne-Jones.

Her young brothers, two sturdy, bright-eyed boys, make a homely and pleasant picture as they play in the garden, against a background of flowering shrubs and trees in Summer foliage, with a dog of rare species, an animal that gave touching evidences, in my presence, of its devotion to its young masters.

But it was not until I found myself in the presence of the artist himself that I recognized the soul which made the home live, the fount of the generous inspiration to harmony and refinement which formed an aroma about the little dwelling.

Julius Jagwin, young, slender, keen of feature and unconventional in attire, himself ushered me into the most unconventional studio that ever held an artist.

Not here were the mountains of bric-à-brac that litter the home of the successful London artist; not here the scraps of brocade and tapestry which make so many studios more like a show-room than a part of a home. No; all was workmanlike simplicity, but the simplicity that speaks of genius, of taste, of a sense of beauty.

Sitting on the edge of an old stone seat, I watched the glowing face of the artist as, a fragrant cigar between his lips, and his hands, massive in their suggestion of skill and strength, passing and repassing through his luxuriant hair, he talked to me of his art in words such as I have never before heard from human lips, direct, modest, honest, striking in their eloquent simplicity.

A little picture—a gem in its way—a group of old fishermen leaning on a rail near the edge of the cliff, with the sea for a background, stood, unfinished, on an improvised easel close to the great window.

I could have gazed at it for hours; but time was short, and there lay many miles of railway between me and London.

Regretfully, but not before I had been prevailed upon to assist at that most delightful function, tea in a studio, I took my leave, and drove back to catch my train with my mind basking in the afterglow of an afternoon full of restful, esthetic beauty, and with the figure of my host, lithe, lissom, striking, before my mind's eye still. Assuredly Julius Jagwin, painter and man, is one of the most interesting figures of our time.

I re-read this interview, and then put it away in my desk, thoroughly satisfied with my work. No proof was sent me, but that was just the sort of attention to business I should have expected from the sub-editor; and, for the rest, it did not matter, as I could

trust the copy-reader not to let any mistakes pass.

I did not see the next number of *The Lash* when it first came out, for I was away with my camera, "doing" the effects of a fire on a mansion in Nottinghamshire. To my surprise, when I got home that night I found a post-card waiting for me with the following words on it:

"Bravo! First time I ever read an interview that told the truth! Congratulate you on your pluck! But the missus! Keep out of her way if you value your life, till she's calmed down a bit!

"J. J."

I was puzzled, uneasy. I read the post-card, which was evidently from Jagwin, two or three times, and then I went out to buy a copy of *The Lash*.

Yes, there were the reproductions of my photographs, right enough, and there was—oh, horror!—"An Interview with Julius Jagwin."

My brain swam as I read, and a succession of cold shivers passed down my back when I recognized the fact that I had sent to *The Lash*, by mistake, a private letter to my cousin Tom, while I must have sent to him the copy intended for the paper.

This was what I read, in all the horrible realism of cold print:

DEAR TOM:

Just found time to scribble you a line, after an awful day's work.

This morning, "by command," I got into a cattle-truck on the "London, Smash 'em and Roll 'em over," and was bumped and joggled down, in a third-class smoking, to Cranville, bound for the diggings of Julius Jagwin, whom we've got to call "young" and "rising," as if he were just out of the nursery, though he's forty-five if he's a day, and has probably risen as far as he ever will.

You know what a beastly hole Cranville is, with its bare promenade and traditions of typhoid and its pestilential harbor? I tramped under a broiling sun, without a scrap of shelter from the sun or wind, right out of the town, to a shabby little side-street shut in by a bare hill and a broken fence from any sort of view.

Here, jammed in between a big, brand-new public-house and a row of commonplace run-up-by-the-yard suburban houses, too pretentious to be called cottages and too pokey for anything else, I found Jagwin's diggings.

The house stood out from the rest by having nothing in its fore-court—I can't

call it a garden—save an untidy sunflower considerably past its prime, and by having mud-color hangings in the windows—whether of that hue from choice or from hoar antiquity, I cannot say.

I was shot through a narrow entrance passage, with a bit of stuff on the wall which may have been for ornament or may have been something hanging up to dry, into a room smelling strongly of Irish stew, the usual suburban room with the usual folding doors. At one end was the dinner-table, and at the other the usual assortment of sham antiques and cheap furniture of the so-called "quaint" kind, with a good Delft jug or two on a table in the corner.

Mrs. and Miss Jagwin received me, both dressed in the silly pre-Raphaelite gowns that "esthetic" Londoners wore twenty years ago, for which style the mother is much too stout, and the daughter as much too thin. However, Mrs. Jagwin, who is a jolly, good-humored woman with no pretensions to excessive culture, frankly said that they dress in these baggy garments because they don't require "making;" you simply sew two or three pieces of stuff together, stitch in the sleeves, and there you are! With which explanation I was quite content, as we had a good laugh over it.

The daughter paints a little, but has no talent. She was very straightforward and nice, though, and so I forgave her her angles and her terrible shock of red hair.

Two snub-nosed small boys, her brothers, were playing in the back garden with a mongrel who tried to bite my legs.

They were all nice people, but the best of the bunch was Julius himself, a tall, thin, worn-faced fellow, with the largest hands I ever saw, and the roughest hair. He was dressed in a ragged blue Jersey and a pair of fisherman's overalls, with a conspicuous patch in them of a different color from the rest of the material.

He took me into the wash-house at the back, which is the only room with a window that suits him, and here I sat on the edge of the copper while he told me frankly that nine-tenths of the jargon the painters talk about "art" was jargon and the remaining one-tenth lies. He himself, he says, paints because he was born to paint, and that's all he knows about it. He talked with an end of a burnt-down pipe in his mouth, and had nothing to say about the picture he was at work on, one of the best I've seen anywhere this year, which he spoke of, with a jerk of the head, as a "pot-boiler."

We all had hard work to rig the place up for my photographs, but we carried the best "bits" about from room to room and from corner to corner, and, with the help of a couple of palms and a big fern which they borrowed from the public-house next door, and which we carted about all over the place—you will recognize them in each picture—we did rather well.

Then Mrs. Jagwin insisted on making me eat some sandwiches, and, lastly, Jagwin took me to the pub next door, and we treated each other before I came away.

He's an awfully good fellow, and as clever as he can stick, and there's no pose or nonsense about him. I only wish I could say as much of some of the other fellows whom I've interviewed!

The moment I saw what an awful thing I had done, I sat down and wrote, resigning from *The Lash*.

But it was too late. Before I had time to close the envelope, the post brought me my dismissal from the editor of *The Lash* himself, with the unkind suggestion, distinctly traceable in the formal words, that I must have lost my wits or taken to drink.

And the same post brought me a letter from my cousin Tom, suggesting exactly the same thing!



SUBMISSION

WHEN I recall how my rebellious heart
 Made mighty protest 'gainst intruding cares,
 And how they proved to be a needed part,
 Of all the blessings, which my life now shares;
 When I remember how I fought with Fate,
 And lived to learn misfortune's benefit
 Through present ills, I go my way elate,
 And answer to Time's threats, "I will submit."

Craven and coward were I, to complain
 Of that commanding Purpose which now shows
 The larger meaning of my little woes,
 The mighty harvest, in small seeds of pain.
 The path behind me by God's love is lit—
 If dark the future seems, I will submit.

I will rebel against my own distrust,
 Against all doubt, all selfishness in me.
 Plucked by the roots, and flung down in the dust,
 Shall my belittling faults and vices be.
 The faint, unfocussed will, ignoble fear,
 Anger and hate, and greed (the only hell),
 The fretful word, the weak, self-pitying tear—
 Against this hideous horde I will rebel.

To mind-made trouble let the mind give ease;
 Yet is there other trouble and great grief,
 As unpreventable as death. Belief
 Vast as all space, alone can cope with these.
 Across each sorrow God's own name is writ,
 And, come what may, I will, I will submit.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

THE CURIOUS PASSING OF ALICIA

By James Drexel Turner

LAWRENCE has been conceded by many people to be the most unpleasant of human beings. People who knew him very well, sometimes said that he was "hard." They mentioned that quality with the tone they would have used in ascribing it to a paving-stone.

He came down to New York from the hills of Vermont, where his father had been a cobbler who went from house to house to make shoes for the farmers' children, taking his motherless child along. Lawrence is not bad to look at now at forty-two, but one can trace in his face and figure a singularly ugly growing boy, when those long limbs were lank and knobby and the nose and chin were out of all proportion to the face. Fed at the "second table" when there was "company" in the various farm-houses, sleeping in windy garrets, dressed in the old clothes of the farmers—no boy's clothes would have covered the lank, tall frame—one can imagine the boy's hardness coming upon him as a tree puts on a thicker bark toward the north.

When his father died, he drifted down to Boston, and, by some chance, went to work in a printing-office.

At nineteen, he was foreman in the office of a little "mail-order" monthly; the sort that acquires subscribers by various devices, from offering a silk dress and a silver tea-set, for ten fifty-cent subscribers, to guessing contests. It was a missing-word contest that finally threw *The Mail Bag* into the hands of Lawrence. A rival publication called the attention of the post-office authorities to the fact that

the missing letters changed so often that it was impossible for a candidate to win the trip to the Holy Land which was offered to a successful guesser; and the proprietors of the paper found that their way to further freedom lay through Canada. From there, they sold the paper to Lawrence for a nominal sum. And he began that career as a power in journalism which has made his name known wherever the colored supplement has reached.

There have been many versions of his success—for wonderful success he has had. It has been sneered at, and men—mostly the unsuccessful—have despised him for it, while they have tried to explain it. It has been called the thieving of other men's ideas, luck, a mere passing thing, a whim of the moment, everything save what it is: the understanding of commonplace humanity by one of themselves. Lawrence had dreamed and planned and hoped to rise, and he knew that other poor people had the same visions, and he published the fairy tales which fed their hopes. Even the reporting of news-items was twisted into banal sentimentality when it was possible.

I remember once—I was an artist on *The Lance* in those days—a fairly thrilling story came in about a ship that was wrecked on the New England coast in a place where there were no life-savers. Volunteers were called for, and an old woman who had lost a son at sea sent her only remaining child in the boat of rescuers. "If somebody had tried to save my boy, he might be alive now," she had

said. The boat came back with the rescued; that was all in the report, and the other papers tucked even that much away in a corner. It was Lawrence who displayed flaming headlines, and told a story on the front page of how a weeping old mother gave up her last son in the forlorn hope of rescuing a man clinging to the rigging of a foundered ship, and when the old woman's prayers were answered, and the boat returned, lo! the rescued man was her elder son, long mourned as dead. I shall never forget the ugly grin on Lawrence's face when he ordered the illustration to accompany that story.

"It isn't true," some novice ventured.

"What difference does that make?" Lawrence said. "The public will never discover the difference. They like it that way."

It was in Alicia Cavenham's apartment one Sunday afternoon that I told this story. She had met Lawrence two or three times, but she was not the sort of girl to appeal to him—if any woman ever did appeal to him. As is natural with all successful men, there were dozens of stories afloat concerning him. Discharged clerks and reporters told lurid tales of the women on the paper's staff, most of which Lawrence never heard. He was too busy talking shop, boring his new acquaintances—who made friends with him in the hope that they might use his paper or his money for their own ends—to have any personal affairs even hinted to him.

Alicia was a very shrewd girl of about twenty-eight. I had known her since she was fifteen. I had spent some years in Paris since then, and two of them had been brightened by Alicia and Mrs. Cavenham, who came to live in a *pension* near my studio. Alicia and I grew to know each other very well during long afternoons of loitering on the quays or going by boat to St. Cloud. There never was a moment when we were at all in love with each other. Alicia had no alluring ways with which to capture the

unsuspecting heart of an ineligible young black-and-white artist. She never even took the trouble to look pretty for me. But she was a fairly good chum if the sun shone and we reached home in comfortable time for dinner, and she had a way of getting into every place in Paris, locked or unlocked.

A fellow-student whose father had made a fortune in a New York collecting agency, and who had sent his son abroad to become a portrait-painter, paid Alicia a compliment which he considered fine, and which was surely fitting, when he said that she would have been worth any price as a server of legal papers. By hook or by crook, Alicia arrived within the inner portals.

On a Sunday afternoon, I sat in the parlor of the Cavenhams' little apartment in the Sierra, and with an open fire and a cocktail which Alicia made for me because I was an old friend, I allowed myself to talk of Lawrence.

"Jim," Alicia said, finally, "I think you are all mistaken about that man. He isn't hard."

"What do you call it when a man can travesty a mother's feelings?"

"You are no psychologist. He is really very soft—ridiculously soft, sentimentally soft. He thought how wonderful and beautiful it would have been for that rescued man to be that poor old woman's son, and instinctively he made it so—as far as he could, for other sentimentalists to enjoy. I'll wager that could you have seen his eyes above that 'grin' you speak of, you would have found tears in them."

"Alicia," I said, brutally, "you are losing your wits. You have read novels of a romantic sort until your poor head is turning. Did you ever see Joseph Lawrence?"

"I met him once at Mrs. Langham's, at a tea."

"Did he strike you then as a sentimentalist?"

"He struck me as the awkwardest, most miserably embarrassed creature I had ever seen in my life. He had on

a good coat, but it bore the appearance of having been borrowed for the occasion. He didn't know what to do with his tea, and he remarked that tea-drinking was a pastime fit only for old maids. As Mary Langham is somewhat sensitive concerning her age, it was not a tactful remark."

"And you wondered why civilized people had asked him to their house."

"Indeed, I did not. I knew that he had ten millions and that *The Lance* is a power. The Langhams would like tremendously to see Mary marry him. They are not rich."

"But how could a girl marry him?"

"You are not a girl, and ten millions are ten millions. If the worst came to the worst, such a sum would provide a very decent alimony. Why do you never bring him here?"

"Lawrence? In the first place we are not on terms of intimacy, and in the second place you would both be bored to death."

"No, I do not think we should," Alicia said, with conviction.

By what means I do not know, Lawrence was towed into the Sierra, and I found him there one evening when I called. From the suspicious glance he gave me, I inferred that he thought that I had planned this whole thing, his visit and mine on top of it, by way of putting myself on an equality with my employer. That I might know that success was not to crown my efforts, he failed to remember me at all.

He sat awkwardly talking to Mrs. Cavenham, who is a Southern woman, and who was genuinely distressed at his bad manners. She showed him a Corot which her father had purchased from the artist himself in the early Barbizon days. Mrs. Cavenham always keeps that Corot where she can, as you may say, put her hands upon it. It is little more than a study for Corot's "Grove of Pan," but it is a sort of *cachet* to have had a father who traveled abroad, and who purchased a Corot in those old days, and I must say that few people ever fail to give Mrs. Cavenham due deference on

account of the picture. Lawrence was one of them.

"There's one thing I never could comprehend," he said, as though he mildly wondered at having this one blank spot in his otherwise perfect understanding, "and that is why a man sits down to paint trees, and not green trees either, but brown trees, when there are *people* to paint. Unless it is," he added, "that the artist does not know how to paint anything but daubs of trees."

Mrs. Cavenham moved away. Finally, when Lawrence had gone, she told Alicia that, if that ignorant, insolent creature ever came there again, she could receive him alone.

It is my impression that this was Lawrence's last visit, but I know that Alicia met him here and there that Winter. Alicia was not above allowing herself to adorn the opera-boxes and dinner-tables, as well as afternoon teas, of that portion of society she elegantly named the "second cut." Alicia had a microscopic income, and her charms were not of the sort to make her specially desired by the smartest people. The fact that she was on the crush lists of the inner circle of New York society made her valuable to those just outside but sufficiently near to see what went on inside. She had long made up her mind to marry a millionaire with ambitions, and she concluded that she had found him in Lawrence. That Lawrence seemed oblivious to the opportunity was the one obstacle, from Alicia's point of view, to the complete happiness of them both.

Lawrence, for some reason I have never been able to comprehend, began that Spring to notice that I was alive. I had been the art manager of *The Lance* for some time, but my intercourse with my employer had been confined to the strictest business matters. But one day he came into the room where I worked, and asked me to go out to luncheon with him.

I discovered presently that he had been asked to allow his picture to be used in one of those gift-books made up of portraits of successful and prominent

men, which the subjects purchase in lots of one hundred at five dollars per volume, and he wished me to select the photograph which was to be engraved for this work.

"I hesitated for some time," Mr. Lawrence explained to me, "but they finally made me see the public side of it. They have a right to see my face, and get an idea that when I say a thing I mean it."

I assented to this, although I had my doubts concerning the interest of the public in the forthcoming collection.

As I sat there eating the food Lawrence had purchased, I tried to catch my own emotions and analyze them. I was not jealous of Lawrence. God knows I would not exchange my personality for his. The things that he said were sometimes ignorant and sometimes almost childish. He boasted gently of his new automobile, of "the club," a great political organization to which he had been elected; of the duchess in London who had asked him to one of her parties; but this would not have annoyed me. In the abstract, it showed a boyish quality in the man; an innocent pride in toys, which in some men we know is not unlovable. But in this man, it ate into you by means of your own rage and disgust at him because, the moment, when you tried to be agreeable to him, to meet him on the ground that he had chosen, he insolently pushed you off as though he would say: "Keep your place. You are my paid servant."

I left the table that day, feeling that I could not long remain in Lawrence's employ without losing my self-respect.

I liked sometimes to talk to Alicia, and, whenever I went to see her, she drew from me every item of information concerning Lawrence that she could. And we played at psychological discussions with him as a subject.

That Spring, Lawrence, as usual, went to Europe. I told Alicia of his departure, but she already knew of it. She was looking thin and pale, and I

jokingly asked her if she was pining over Lawrence and his millions.

"Maybe," she answered. "Dick, do you know, I am going to marry that man."

"Good Lord!" I said.

"Of course, he doesn't know it. But I am. I know exactly what he wants. He has never had a bit of affection in his life. He has been knocked about from pillar to post, snubbed and despised, until he is tender all over, where he is not callous. But underneath there is a sensitive nature. It has had no show."

"It certainly has not," I said, drily. "How do you propose to give it an opening?"

"That is my affair. I am going to have all that money, and I am going to take great pleasure in seeing my theories carried out. You are going to see a happy man who believes in people, who says pleasant things instead of rude ones, who does——"

"In short, you are going to give us a Christmas Carol with Lawrence as Scrooge and yourself as what—The Spirit of the Present, or Tiny Tim?"

Alicia laughed. "Probably that has colored my dreams. But you are not so obtuse as you seem. Lawrence is a Dickensy sort of personage. I'm not so sure," Alicia said, pensively, "that we are not all a little like that. Otherwise Dickens would not be so eternally popular. It is that very thing in Lawrence, hidden from your culture-blind eyes, that makes *The Lance* popular. He strikes the note of humanity."

"The office-boy is not particularly culture-blind, and his hatred of Lawrence is the most intense feeling I ever witnessed the expression of."

It was a month later that Lawrence sent for me to come to London to look at a lot of illustrating he was having done over there, and I went too hastily to say good-bye to the Cavenhams. It was in the third week of my stay that I had a short letter from Alicia. It was written from St. Luke's Hospital, and she told me that she was going to undergo a slight surgical operation.

I write to you about it, because mother probably will, for naturally she is disturbed over my taking the chloroform. That is practically all there is to it. There is no necessity for the operation except that it interferes with my good looks. It is superficial—a mere nothing. But, my dear Dick, I want to ask you to do me a favor. *If any one speaks to you concerning this, do not say that it is superficial.* Say simply that you knew that I was to have the operation. I trust you to do this.

Yours sincerely,
A. C.

P. S.—Look solemn, please, when you speak of it.

I did look solemn when I spoke of it, because the next thing I heard from the Cavenhams was of Alicia's death.

Her mother wrote me so long a letter that I realized her loneliness in her deprivation of Alicia. She spoke of her own fears, which Alicia lightly and bravely put aside. "She went to her death with a gay jest on her lovely lips," the poor mother wrote.

But the astounding thing came later. I went home after two months to find that Lawrence was in mourning for Alicia Cavenham, that he had formally adopted her mother as his, despite what I felt must have been poor Mrs. Cavenham's feeble struggles, and had announced to the world that he and Miss Cavenham were engaged, and that it would have been announced upon his return from Europe that Summer had she not died.

There was an enormous change in the man. I longed to know what had brought about the change, and also much that had been carefully withheld from Mrs. Cavenham and myself. For Mrs. Cavenham in her apartments, surrounded by the flowers, the ten thousand attentions of Lawrence, was as bewildered as I was.

"Richard, I never knew him. No son could be tenderer," she said to me, pitifully. "I always wanted a son. When I have seen other mothers with all this care, I have envied them. It makes it so much harder that Alicia could never know this."

I thought how little tenderness Alicia had ever given any one, and I marveled more than ever. "Had they been engaged long?" I asked. To save

my life I could not restrain my curiosity. Mrs. Cavenham looked embarrassed.

"I do not know. Alicia never spoke of it. You see, she knew that I had a foolish dislike for Henry"—she faltered over the name—"because I did not know him—and she kept it from me until after the operation."

She put her handkerchief to her eyes; she was bewildered. But Lawrence had taken her in hand in a masterful way, and she leaned on him, glad of his support, his companionship, for he gave much of his time to her. I do not know what became of the Corot.

The change in the man was as great as it must have been in the impossible old Scrooge to whom Alicia and I had once likened him. If I might express it so, it was as though the magnetic currents had been reversed, and he had become positive instead of negative. The man had exchanged his arrogance for self-respect, and the lowest worker in his employ felt it. "Conversion," religious people might have called it, I suppose.

It was six months later that I had an agitated letter from Mrs. Cavenham, asking me to come and see her upon "*important business*," heavily underscored.

When I arrived at the Sierra, I found the apartment forlorn with denuded walls and linen-covered chairs. Mrs. Cavenham and a widowed cousin were going to Europe as Lawrence's guests. He did nothing half-way. Her sweet face with its delicate features was shadowed by a sort of horrified perplexity when she came to see me, and I felt her hand cold and trembling.

"Richard," she said, with little catches in her breath, "you were Alicia's friend."

The statement had the intonation of a question, and I answered, "Yes."

"And your mother and I were friends. I want you to tell me what this means."

I opened a loose bundle of papers huddled untidily together, and saw that they were in Alicia's handwriting, and that they bore marks of corrections and erasures.

"This," I said, "seems to be a draft of a letter."

"Was it—?" the poor woman faltered. "Ought I to show it to—Henry?"

"Ought you to show it to *me*?"

Mrs. Cavenham's face was red.

"Was it written to you?"

I sat down on a sofa, feeling its tight linen shroud give a stitch or two under my weight, and read the sheets in Alicia's big, heavy handwriting.

"My Dear One," I saw. "It was not for me, dear Mrs. Cavenham," I said, hastily; "Alicia wrote to me often, but never in that way."

"Read on," she said.

The doctors have just told me that I am going to die. I have been to the great ones, and there can be no mistake. That I may not die in agony, I am first to have an operation, and I undergo that to-morrow. By the time this reaches you, I shall be a real woman no longer, or I shall be on that border-land where no call of Earth may reach me.

For one thing, I am glad. It is that—Oh, my *Dear*, I may speak to you—calling you *that*.

If I had lived, I should have had to go on through all the long years seeing you sometimes, but holding the secret it seems to me in these last days you have the right to know, locked fast in my heart. And perhaps you, too, would be poorer in never knowing that one woman devotedly and truly *loved* you! One woman to whom your voice was the sweetest sound in all harmony, one woman who would have died of happiness to have held your hand against her breast. I heard you say once that you were not of those who attracted easily. Sometimes, this last year, when I have sat apart from you, and looked at your tired face, I have thought that its tension might have eased a little could you have known how one heart was melting with tenderness for you. I loved you so much that, but for very shame, I think I should have tried to tell you. I loved you enough to wish that you might find such sympathy in some woman you would desire to marry. I do not believe I should have been jealous. Jealousy is too mean to have a place in my tenderness for you. In my heart, there has been, I think, something of motherhood, too. You were my tired, big boy, who came in my dreams to put his head on my shoulder for comfort and rest. When you have had your triumphs, I think some of the tears that came into my eyes were the tears that a happy woman might have shed over her son. And now that I am going out of the world wherein you are, I must— Oh,

my Dear One—I *must* tell you that there has *always*—ever since long ago—been one to whom you were *All*! one who had day-dreams once, but who knows now that they could never have come true. Let *mé* give you in my last words, words whose truth you cannot doubt because they are written by one who is done with Earth, the thought that to you has been given all one loving heart had to give. When men speak of love, you may know that to you—my dearest, my Great Heart—there has been given the purest devotion of one woman, who loved you dying; whose death was sweetened by the thought that, dying, she could offer you her love.

ALICIA CAVENHAM.

It was some minutes after I had read to the end before I could speak to Mrs. Cavenham, who sat a stricken figure before me.

"It was not to me," I said.

"Then to whom was it? It could not have been to Henry, because she was engaged to him, and this was to some one else. Ought I to show it to him? Is it fair and right, if Alicia deceived him, that I should be to him what I am? And yet—how can I give him up! I could not have hoped to have such a son. I cannot forgive Alicia for having been untrue to him."

I seemed to be seeing Alicia in a new light.

"My dear lady," I said, "do you know what I think this is? I think it is fiction."

"Fiction? Do you mean that you think Alicia was writing a story?" Her face cleared.

"Something like that. It is probable that she was thinking of Lawrence, and letting her fancy go, tormenting herself with the idea of leaving him, and she wove that letter. But, if I were you, and it would make me more comfortable, I would show it to Lawrence. He would know. She may have spoken to him concerning it."

"I should be more comfortable," she said; "but it would kill me to lose him."

I went down in the elevator, lost in thought, and I suppose it was my subconsciousness which guided my feet to Dr. Butterfield's door. Butterfield was my physician, too. I

found him at home, knocking billiard-balls about.

"Did Alicia Cavenham know that she was going to die?" I asked.

"Not she," he answered, promptly, "nor any of the rest of us. There was no earthly reason to expect it. She had every plan made for being well in a month. In fact, I cannot understand why she insisted upon the operation. It was the ether that killed her, most unexpectedly. Had we dreamed of its being risky, we never should have tried it. But—there was one queer thing. She made me promise that, if any inquiries were made, we were not to say that the operation was slight. We were simply to say

that she recovered. She asked me if I couldn't say 'unexpectedly,' you know. I knew Alicia a long time, but I wouldn't promise that. Poor girl! I put the 'unexpectedly' into another sentence."

I went to the steamer to say good-bye to Mrs. Cavenham.

"I showed that to Henry," she whispered. "He said it was all right. He knew all about it."

Thinking it over, I conclude that Alicia was a psychologist—and, if she had not succumbed to the ether "unexpectedly," she would undoubtedly have had those ten millions. I wonder if Lawrence would have mellowed as he has?



L'AVEU

JE t'aimerai; les jours s'en iront un à un,
Tel avec un baiser, tel avec un sourire,
Tel avec une larme en ce tendre parfum
Que mon âme déjà sur tes lèvres respire...

Tu sauras que je suis ton âme et ta douceur
Et toi mon rêve et le seul espoir qui demeure,
Et mon doux rêve et ta tendresse, frère et sœur,
Verront passer nos jours sous la même demeure.

Amis de humbles vœux par qui l'on est meilleur,
Fiers mais non pas épris des vanités superbes
Qui font le monde hostile au rêve intérieur,
Nous lierons nos désirs comme de belles gerbes.

Heureux d'aimer la vie, heureux d'aimer l'amour
Et le fardeau léger des devoirs pacifiques
Mêlant à nos bonheurs simples de chaque jour
Le souvenir charmant des printemps magnifiques,
L'un vers l'autre nous pencherons nos fronts d'aïeux,
Heureux d'aimer la mort, simplement—sans adieux...

VICOMTE JACQUES DE BEAUFORT.



MERRY X-MA'S—divorced women.

COMPOSITE

"I WOULD like," said the youth, "to write a great book. How shall I go about it?"

"Don't! I beg of you," said the novelist. "Write one that pays, as I do, or else—study law."

"I do not care to write a book for the sake of the pay," said the youth. He was very young, and must be forgiven for this. "Perhaps, after all, I had better be a lawyer."

So he became a lawyer. But the old ambition to write a great book came over him again.

"Anything but that," said a friend to whom he told his wish. "If you don't like the law, be a doctor."

So he studied medicine.

In time, however, this palled upon him. He still thought of that book. He felt that he had a mission.

"You could do so much more in the pulpit," said another.

So he preached, until the hollowness of it came over him.

And he left the pulpit.

One day, he woke up and found that the great book was written. And he laughed at the thought.

"It was not I—it was the lawyer, the doctor, the clergyman, and the other man, who did it."



NEVER TRIED IT AGAIN

MRS. BRIGGS—Hasn't your husband ever neglected to give you a Christmas present?

MRS. HENPECK—Only once.



NATURAL SELECTION

"STRANGE, the baby takes no notice of me."

"He is only attracted by bright objects."



TO most men, pretty ankles are more alluring than brains; which may be why girls display the former more than the latter.